

Teaching English As A Foreign Language: A Portrait Of Primary English Teaching In Kupang

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Abstract: This observational research, which focuses on teacher tactics for teaching English as a Foreign Language to primary school kids, was carried out in two classes at a public primary school. The purpose of this study was to answer the following question: what teaching tactics do the English instructors at this school use? The data were analyzed qualitatively using categories formulated based on theories related to instructional strategies, which include planning and preparing instruction, implementing the teaching and learning process, and assessing students' achievement. The study's primary findings are as follows: 1) Despite the teachers going through the same phases of preparation, the plan is followed and results differ; 2) the teachers can employ games as a learning tool. 3) even though the curriculum demands teachers to integrate the skills (reading, listening, writing, and speaking), in practice, teachers do not teach English in an integrative manner. 4) Time management has become a challenge for teachers at this school. 5) In terms of teacher assessment methodologies, the teachers examine students' success through remedial instruction once a week after the session is ended in areas where students failed to grasp.

Keywords: *teaching strategies, primary English language education, ELT.*

INTRODUCTION

English is a compulsory subject in Indonesia from the school to university level. According to Ministry of Education Decree No. 0487/4/1992 (Suyanto, 1994), English is considered as the local content in elementary school. Though many private primary schools started introducing English long before public schools, earlier research (Suyanto, 1994) found

that English instruction in these schools was inadequate. Many elements contribute to the success of English teaching and learning. Teachers' teaching practices are one of the variables. As a result, this study is focused with analyzing the teaching practices of two public school teachers in Kupang, Nusa Tenggara Timur.

In terms of methods, Sadtono (1997: 173) believes that one of the most significant prerequisites is competent teachers. A teacher must have at least two qualifications: (1) an English qualification and (2) a teaching qualification. The first qualification is vital since the teacher serves as a role model for his or her students. The second qualification is a solid understanding of how to teach children as well as the capacity to put that knowledge into practice in the classroom.

English may be taught in elementary schools in Indonesia based on the curriculum 1994 in a flexible setting (Alwasilah, 2000). This flexibility means that this topic may (but does not have to) be taught when the school is ready. To ensure the effectiveness of English teaching and learning in elementary school, the school must first understand the purpose of the teaching and learning. In terms of the goals of elementary school English instruction, students are taught to understand simple spoken and written English (Huda, 1999; Suyanto, 1997; Sinaga, 1997).

Teaching English to children is not the same as teaching adults (Brown, 2001), because it involves assisting children in achieving societally valued goals and objectives in ways that are consistent with sound psychological principles of childhood (Jarolimek and Foster, 1989).

Huddleston (1991: 2) outlines the fundamental concepts of child development and language learning. The fundamental concept is that children in primary or elementary school learn by doing (Piaget, 1955; Brown, 2001). This implies toddlers learn by doing and manipulating items in their surroundings. If this idea were applied to the EFL environment, it would imply that children in language lessons must be active rather than passive; they must be involved in activities that include language; they must be working on meaningful tasks that require the use of language.

Second, children learn in social environments, in groups in which certain stakeholders know more than others. This principle implies that children require not just hands-on or direct experiences, but also interactions with and learning from others, both adults and other children.

Third, language acquisition happens when learners figure out how the language works, by developing and testing assumptions about the language. This implies that it emphasizes the significance of providing learners with opportunities to practice the target language (Swain, 1985 in Nunan, 1988). As a result, learners must have opportunities to use and explore with the new language. Mistakes are a normal and unavoidable component of language acquisition.

Finally, language learning happens through social engagement, as a result of needing to use the language with others in an authentic communication situation.

Even so, as Brown (2001) argues, teaching English integration is more successful than teaching English isolation, as we used to do in the past. It is predicted that by incorporating language skills and language components into English education, teachers would be able to create an engaging classroom interaction that will motivate students to converse in English.

Aside from the concepts of teaching to elementary school described above, it is also critical that elementary school English instructors understand the principles of teaching English as recommended by Brown (2001).

Studying English should be 'meaningful' at this level, just like studying other subjects. According to Ibrahim and Syaodih (1996), meaning indicates that there is a relationship between knowledge and actuality. For example, the pupils understood the meaning of the words but were unable to translate them into simple sentences or utilize them to communicate. Second, the knowledge is relevant to the user. For example, pupils may know how to welcome people in English but are unable to utilize it since there is no chance to do so.

According to Alwasilah (2000), the discussion on teaching English in elementary school necessitates qualified teachers who know a lot about children psychology and English teaching methodology for children in order to successfully encourage students to learn English and help the learning process itself. One factor that contributes to the effectiveness of English instruction is the difficulty of teaching English to primary school students.

As stated by Musthafa (2000), there are at least three problems that children in Indonesian primary schools should confront when learning English as a foreign language. The first difficulty is that students do not utilize English in social situations that involve children in their everyday lives. Whereas learning, as defined by Cox in Nicholls (1999) and Dewey as described in Pardjono (2002), is the development of information and skills via individual experiences rather than through texts or teachers. How will youngsters learn English and regard it as a valuable and important activity if they are not shown and exposed to functional uses of English.

Furthermore, as Franke in Nunan and Lamb (1996) propose, a language may be best taught by actively utilizing it in the classroom. Teachers must encourage direct and spontaneous use of the foreign language in the classroom rather than employing analytical approaches that rely on explanation of grammatical principles (Richard and Rogers, 1986 in Nunan and Lamb, 1996).

The second obstacle is connected to how English words are written as opposed to how they are spoken. During this stage, children are still learning their first language, in which the sounds are continuously mirrored in the way they are written down. As a result, it is normal for children to be perplexed about how to read and write a word because there is no evident one-to-one correlation between a word's pronunciation and spelling.

Another reason why students utilize their native language in the classroom, as Harmer (2002: 131) explains, is that when they study a foreign language, they employ translation. This is because they often attempt to make sense of a new language (and conceptual) world through the linguistic world with which they are already accustomed. According to Read (2000), when learners learn vocabulary, they prefer to recall lists of English words and rely on a bilingual dictionary as a basic communication resource.

According to Read (2000), children can acquire vocabulary in context through reading and listening activities that focus on the extent to which students can infer the meaning of new terms when they read or hear them. Furthermore, as Sukayadi (2006) recommends, the instructor should make meaning visible through real objects or the presentation of experience. In other words, when a language learner makes a mistake or has a misconception about something, the teacher does not correct it through translation but tries to show something to make the meaning clear (Sukayadi, 2006) or conveys meaning directly through demonstration and action (Richard and Rogers, 1986 cited in Nunan and Lamb, 1996). Sukayadi (2006) further stated that memorizing vocabulary is less useful than using it in whole sentences. For example, in order for pupils to utilize new phrases, the instructor can ask them multiple times in various contexts and evoke the scenario.

In the previous challenge, there were commonly held incorrect beliefs that children learn in the same way as adults do. As a result, teachers tend to teach youngsters in the same way that they teach adults. According to Alwasilah (2000), generalization and the application of one strategy to two distinct groups of learners are deceptive because teachers must recognize that children live in a world that is distinct from that of adults. Teachers appear to need to know and comprehend the world in order to construct a suitable learning environment for students depending on their cognitive development. As a result, classroom materials should be concrete and numerous, and students should be provided direct experiences and concrete items that can be seen, handled, touched, and discussed.

Furthermore, as Van Lier (1996) suggests, "language learning is the cumulative results of sustained effort and engagement over time, with continuity being central." If the class is the only time the students are engaged with the language, whether it is once a week, once a day, or

more frequently, development will be either non-existent or extremely sluggish. Although it alludes to a serious issue with all foreign language acquisition. If the distance between what is done in the classroom and what is done outside of the classroom is too large, the chances of learning anything at all are severely harmed.

Suryosubroto (2002) defines teaching strategies as "procedures used by the teacher to achieve a goal." To achieve the aim, instructors play a vital role in the teaching and learning process since teachers affect the majority of student output (Jarolimek and Foster, 1989). Usman (1990: 7) describes a competent teacher will be able to establish an effective learning environment and manage the process of teaching and learning so that pupils receive the best possible results. To be able to control the process of teaching and learning, instructors must have techniques in place.

Yet the teaching strategies used in this study were inspired by the work of several theorists (see Suryosubroto, 2002; Arikunto, 1990; Brown, 2001; Harmer, 2002; Djamara and Zain, 2002; Ibrahim and Syaodih, 2002; Jarolimek and Foster, 1989; Nicholls, 1999; Nunan and Lamb, 1996, Nunan, 1988) who proposed teaching strategies. Despite variances, these theories often advocate comparable techniques such as planning, implementing the teaching and learning process, and measuring student progress.

Plan and Preparation

Planning (Jarolimek and Foster, 1989: 15) is a decision-making process in which one must select from a set of options. Options that are expected to lead to a desired outcome. Teaching, like any other complicated activity, takes meticulous planning in order to be successful. Teachers, for example, are not allowed to "forget what they should bring with them before they start teaching because what they plan may be useless" (Brown, 2000: 194).

Teachers that understand the value of planning for effective instruction and classroom management prioritize planning as a teaching skill. The crucial relationship between planning and preparation must be addressed since planning leads to the preparation of the materials, tools, and props that will be needed in the lesson. If these resources are prepared before to the class, the teacher will be in a much better position to properly differentiate the activities, as well as cope with maintaining the smooth and effective progress in learning for all students during the session.

In terms of planning, Mawer (1995: 55), as reported by Waring in Nicholls (1999: 99), notes that:

"Planning appears to mediate between a teacher's basic knowledge of the subject being taught and his or her ability to teach the subject effectively, because it brings into play

the teacher's general pedagogical content knowledge. This includes knowledge of theories and principles of teaching and learning, knowledge of the learner, and knowledge of the techniques and principles of teaching such as class management. The plan for a lesson, unit, or course is the result of a considerable degree of thinking on the part of the teacher."

Planning is critical to the smoothness or progress made by pupils in the teaching and learning process. The importance of planning in the teaching and learning process has also been recognized by Djamarah and Zain (2002), who state that the smoothness of the process indicates whether or not the students can focus their attention on the lesson offered by the teacher. As an example, the teacher conducts the activity before finishing the prior activity, or the teacher stops the first activity and then begins the second activity before returning to the first action. If this occurred throughout the procedure, it may divert students focus or attention.

Essentially, if a specific action is prepared first, the purpose of the activity will be more direct and effective. As a result, the teacher must be capable of planning lessons. Before she begins to teach, she should arrange the teaching and learning program and prepare everything that will be taught. Suryosubroto (2002) suggests that when organizing a lesson, teachers should consider the pupils.

According to Johnson (1979), as cited by Suryosubroto (2002):

"Teachers are expected to design and deliver instruction so that student learning is facilitated. Instruction is asset of event design to initiate activate, and support learning in students, it is the process of arranging the learning situation (including the classroom, the student, and the curriculum materials) so that learning is facilitated."

It indicates that to promote the learning process, teachers must arrange lessons with students in mind.

Suryosubroto (2002) divides the planning process into four categories: mastering the curriculum, compiling the instructional material analysis, forming the program for a semester, and forming the lesson plan, which includes knowing the students' characteristics, setting the goal expectation of the study, selecting the material and ordering it, selecting the teaching methods, selecting the teaching aids, and selecting the evaluation strategy. As stated by Jarolimek and Foster (1989: 157), the teacher needs to be able to organize a positive atmosphere for learning, select targets for the year, plan for getting guidance started, develop an instructional strategy by initially learning about the students' characteristics, and prepare student-progress reports for parents.

Implementing the teaching and learning process

After the planning step has been completed, the teacher should carry out the teaching and learning process. The theory employed in this study is a hybrid of different theorists (see Suryosubroto, 2002; Usman, 1990; Sudjana, 1989; Brown, 2001; Jarolimek and Foster, 1989), including the genre-based approach that served as the foundation for the curriculum 2004. According to Suryosubroto (2002) and Sudjana (1989), the teacher should do several things to ensure the success of the teaching and learning process, including opening the teaching and learning process, using a teaching method, delivering the material, managing the classroom, and closing.

Examining Students' Achievement

The assessment shows how teachers digest information and data connected to students' learning and utilize it to shape their next lesson, whether it be the next assignment or a series of activities. The primary goal of this type of evaluation is to uncover faults, challenges, and deficiencies in students' work. It also educates the teacher about the type of advise and information that will be required to improve students' future learning outcomes (Nicholls, 1999: 117). According to Nicholls (1999:119), evaluation has various faces and may be utilized for some reasons.

...Assessment lies at the heart of this process. It can provide a framework in which educational objectives may be set, and pupils' progress charted and expressed. It can yield a basis for planning the next educational steps in response to children's needs... (Report of the Task Group on Assessment and Testing as quoted by Nicholls (1999: 116)).

This phrase implies that assessing children's learning and growth is essential for good teaching and learning. There are various considerations to make, including classroom assessment and remediation.

Based on the foregoing context, the research tried to answer the following research question: what instructional tactics are employed by English teachers at a public primary school in Kupang? These tactics involve instruction planning and preparation, execution of the teaching and learning process, and evaluation of student performance.

METHOD

According to Maxwell (1996: 17-20), a qualitative research design was acceptable in this study. In the case of a qualitative study, the study attempts to understand the meaning of the events, situations, and actions that participants in the study are involved with, as well as the accounts that they give of their lives and experiences; it also attempts to understand the specific context within which the participants act, as well as the influence that this context has on their

action. It indicates that every aspect is considered in order to have a better knowledge of behavior or a thorough comprehension of the situation.

This research included two English teachers (designated as teacher A and B) and their pupils. Participation was entirely optional. Both teachers earned their bachelor's degrees from English Department. A taught grade 4 with 20 kids, and B taught grade 3 with 13 students. Both teachers were fresh to the classroom. Students ranged in age from 8 to 10 years old. These teachers agreed to take part in the study and have the researcher monitor their classes.

This study used two methods of data collection: observation and interviews. However, when gathering data, the researcher must use proper tools such as observation and interviews. To ensure the data's legitimacy, all data collecting was documented. The data was evaluated in numerous phases during the observation. First, the researcher transcribed the audio and video recording transcriptions. The researcher then classified the three tactics depending on the theorists used in the study. During the observation, the researcher recognized the plan and preparation that teachers prepared before teaching, how they implemented their strategy in the course of teaching and learning, and how the teachers graded their students. The data analysis was not just a conclusion but also a continuous evaluation, especially if the data was obtained by audio or video.

Data were gathered from both teachers and students throughout the interview. The interview was done to supplement the observational data. The interview data was evaluated in stages. First, the researcher transcribed the audio and video recorder transcriptions. The researcher then classified the techniques into three categories: preparation, implementation, and assessment. To minimize bias, the identities of the interviewees were withheld, and the responses were gathered based on the categories. The interviews were shortened.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data presentation and analysis will be presented based on the main topics, which will include teacher techniques for planning and preparing lessons, executing the teaching and learning process, and measuring student progress in the classroom.

Strategies used by teachers to plan and prepare lessons

In the context of planning and preparation, both teachers plan and prepare their lessons before teaching. Their preparation may be recognized simply by whether they have planned activities to supplement the lesson, if they have mastered the content, what type of teaching aids they will utilize, and whether the teaching and learning process runs smoothly and successfully. Though both teachers plan and prepare before teaching, their approaches to execute the plan differ. It is entirely dependent on the instructors' ability to control the

classroom. As a result, the outcome of the plan's execution varies. Teacher A follows through on his plans. He also makes the rules regarding what to do and what not to do obvious for the pupils, and what he does works so that the goal of teaching and learning is met. Meanwhile, teacher B makes her plan so broad that the goal of teaching and learning is not always realized.

Strategies used by teachers to carry out the teaching and learning process

Several elements of teacher tactics in implementing the teaching and learning process will be reviewed, including instructional methods in terms of games, integrative skills, and issues that instructors confront in executing the teaching and learning process. Concerning the issues, the difficulties that instructors have are related to a lack of time and the provision of consistent and reliable rules.

Considering the teacher's tactics for implementing the teaching and learning process, both teachers employ a variety of teaching approaches. They usually incorporate games into their teaching techniques. In terms of games, both teachers employ them during the teaching and learning process, but they do it in different ways. Teacher A employs the game as an instrument for learning, thus he constantly connects the games to the themes presented. He can create the games to introduce new content or to evaluate previous stuff. Meanwhile, it appears that instructor B does not believe that games must be related to the topic because games are just for pleasure. As a result, the outcome of game implementation will change. In teacher A's class, students can improve their learning and memory by playing; yet, in teacher B's class, students acquire nothing in terms of learning because the games are often completely different from what is being presented.

In terms of integrative abilities, both teachers do not use them to their full potential. They have not included speaking into their talents. The use of Indonesian language dominates the English class. As a result, it appears that students are discouraged from using English while replying to professors' questions or engaging in class. In summary, English teaching and learning do not occur in terms of integrated skills. In reality, English instruction is intended to encourage pupils to use the target language, and teachers must provide them with as many opportunities to do so as feasible.

In order to successfully carry out the teaching and learning process, both teachers have to deal with a challenge during the teaching and learning process. The issue stems from a lack of time. This school's time management is not well-established. As a result, it may result in a loss for the teachers. Teachers are at a loss as to what activities should be carried out in the classroom. In summary, the school must assist instructors in creating an environment favorable to a smooth and successful teaching and learning process.

In response to classroom rules, teachers must develop rules that are predictable and reliable so that the rules can become students' everyday routines. The rules must be followed in the classroom since the teaching and learning process requires a favorable environment. One of the professors appears to have failed to make the rules obvious in the class, thus it is simple to forecast that the class will have a turbulent time throughout the teaching and learning process. As a result, the smoothness of the teaching and learning process would be disrupted.

Strategies used by teachers to measure student achievement

In terms of teacher practices for measuring students' success, both teachers examine their pupils in a variety of ways, including in-class and remedial assessments. Marking, classroom projects, homework, and quizzes will all be used to assess students in the classroom. In terms of assessing pupils in the classroom, both teachers assess students every session. It might take the shape of classroom assignments and homework.

Teachers regularly restore students' homework or assignments once they have checked and marked them. Both professors also provide quizzes at the conclusion of the lesson to assess students' comprehension of the content. All of these processes are carried out on a regular basis by the teachers. Teachers appear to be prepared for assessing their pupils to some extent. These approaches can assist teachers in determining if pupils require remedial teaching, a remedial exam, or additional lesson-related tasks.

When it comes to remedial learning, not all teachers use it. Only one of the teachers usually provides an extra lesson or remedial instruction after class. During the teaching and learning process, the instructor generally watches students. If he believes that certain students have not comprehended his explanation, he will give an additional class. The extra lesson will last around 15 minutes. During this exercise, the teacher generally re-teaches the pupils so that their skill does not lag behind that of other students. This practice appears to have been beneficial in terms of motivating kids to study more effectively.

CONCLUSION

Several conclusions may be derived from the preceding chapter's results and discussions. First, in terms of planning and preparing instruction, both teachers go through the same steps, such as mastering the topic, preparing for activities, and developing teaching aids that assist with the activities. However, when it comes to implementing the teaching and learning process, teachers have diverse approaches and outcomes. The effectiveness of teaching and learning is heavily dependent on instructors' ability to manage their classrooms.

Furthermore, in terms of how the teaching and learning process is implemented, both teachers employ games as a teaching technique for distinct goals, such as games for enjoyment

and games as an instrument for learning. In terms of games as a learning vehicle, the games are related to the themes presented by the lecturers. As a result, pupils may learn and recall the content by playing.

Following that, teachers do not teach English in a holistic manner. Teachers at this school have not included speaking English in the competencies; nonetheless, the chance to apply other skills such as listening, writing, and reading is insufficient. The use of Indonesian language in the classroom continues to dominate the teaching of English. According to the findings, teaching and learning of English in terms of integrative abilities does not take place in the classroom. Grammar is still used in the teaching and learning of English in schools.

Moreover, time management has been a source of concern for instructors at this institution. Non-academic activities (for example, students' preparation and clean up after take a break) always cause the class to start late. Teachers may suffer a loss as a result of the time constraint. As a result, the school must assist instructors in creating a favorable environment for a smooth and successful teaching and learning process.

Next, when it comes to classroom regulations, teachers must make it clear to pupils what they should and should not do. The regulations are communicated to and agreed upon by all pupils. Besides, the teachers will struggle to manage the class. Students will learn to be accountable for their actions as a result of this.

Lastly, in terms of the teacher's technique for measuring students' success, both teachers evaluate their students in different ways. If one of the teachers notices that the students still do not grasp what he has communicated, he will undertake remedial instruction. Re-teaching is used to provide remedial instruction in a restricted sense. As a result, it appears that the teacher can assist the students in promoting their grasp of the content through this exercise.

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