

Overcoming Instructional Obstacles: The Implementation of Diverse EFL Teaching Strategies in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at the university level requires educators to dynamically implement various teaching strategies to meet diverse student needs. This research aimed to discover the specific strategies lecturers use in teaching English and explore the practical obstacles they face during implementation at Universitas Pohuwato. Employing a qualitative descriptive research method, data were systematically gathered through in-depth audio-recorded interviews with four English lecturers. The processed results reveal that lecturers utilize a multifaceted approach: interactive strategies, visualization, question-and-answer sessions, cooperative student-centered models, role-play, and drilling. Despite these robust strategies, their effectiveness is heavily moderated by several pedagogical and systemic obstacles. These include severe classroom management issues due to large student capacities, significant lack of student vocabulary mastery, poor interpersonal communication among learners, and the absence of adequate technological infrastructure, such as LCD projectors. In conclusion, while lecturers demonstrate pedagogical adaptability, university management must provide better infrastructure and balanced class sizes to fully optimize these EFL teaching strategies.

Informasi Artikel

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Pengajaran bahasa Inggris; Pendidikan tinggi; Hambatan instruksional; Strategi pedagogis

ABSTRAK

Mengajar Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL) di tingkat universitas mengharuskan pendidik untuk secara dinamis menerapkan berbagai strategi pengajaran guna memenuhi kebutuhan mahasiswa yang beragam. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan strategi spesifik yang digunakan dosen dalam mengajar bahasa Inggris dan mengeksplorasi hambatan praktis yang mereka hadapi selama implementasi di Universitas Pohuwato. Menggunakan metode penelitian deskriptif kualitatif, data dikumpulkan secara sistematis melalui wawancara mendalam yang direkam audionya dengan empat dosen bahasa Inggris. Hasil yang telah diproses mengungkapkan bahwa dosen menggunakan pendekatan multifaset: strategi interaktif, visualisasi, sesi tanya jawab, model kooperatif yang berpusat pada mahasiswa, bermain peran, dan latihan (drilling). Meskipun strategi ini kuat, efektivitasnya sangat dipengaruhi oleh beberapa hambatan pedagogis dan sistemik. Ini termasuk masalah manajemen kelas yang parah akibat kapasitas kelas yang besar, kurangnya penguasaan kosakata mahasiswa, komunikasi antarpribadi yang buruk di antara pembelajar, dan tidak memadainya infrastruktur teknologi seperti proyektor LCD. Kesimpulannya, meskipun dosen menunjukkan kemampuan adaptasi pedagogis, manajemen universitas harus menyediakan infrastruktur yang lebih baik dan ukuran kelas yang seimbang untuk mengoptimalkan strategi pengajaran EFL ini sepenuhnya.

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1. Introduction

English is universally recognized as an international language, making it the most widely spoken language globally and an essential skill in the modern era of globalization. In Indonesia, the government has mandated English as the primary foreign language from basic education up to the university level. However, teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) remains a highly challenging task, particularly in regional areas where English serves a very limited societal purpose outside the classroom. To navigate this, one of the most critical competencies an educator must possess is the ability to deploy various teaching strategies that facilitate effective learning. According to the Indonesian Law on Teachers and Lecturers, a professional educator is obligated to plan, execute, and evaluate the learning process creatively to produce highly competitive graduates.

Previous studies have extensively explored teacher strategies in various contexts. For instance, Anggraeni et al. (2020) and Khairuzzanila (2021) highlighted the significance of communicative strategies in enhancing speaking skills at the high school level [2], [5]. Similarly, Purwanti (2017) emphasized that managing student attention during classroom transitions is a major hurdle for EFL educators [8]. Despite the wealth of literature, a noticeable research gap exists regarding the specific micro-level obstacles that intersect with the implementation of these strategies in higher education, particularly in regional universities like Universitas Pohnuato. While much is known about what strategies should be used, less is understood about how systemic issues—such as massive class sizes, lack of digital learning media, and severe vocabulary deficits—disrupt active learning strategies like role-play and visualization. Therefore, this research presents a novelty by moving beyond simply identifying teaching strategies; it comprehensively maps the direct correlation between specific instructional methods and the unique infrastructural and linguistic obstacles encountered by university lecturers. The objective of this study is to discover the strategies lecturers use in teaching English at the English Education Department of Universitas Pohnuato and to thoroughly analyze the obstacles they face during implementation.

2. Method

This research utilized a descriptive qualitative method. According to Creswell, qualitative research is an inquiry process based on distinct methodological traditions that explore a social or human problem deeply, without relying on statistical measurements. This design is deemed highly appropriate as it allows the researcher to capture the natural setting of the pedagogical process and the subjective experiences of the educators. The study was conducted at Universitas Pohnuato,

located on Trans Sulawesi Road, Palopo Village, over a period of two months.

The primary participants were four active English lecturers from the English Education Department. Data were collected using a semi-structured interview guideline designed to elicit in-depth information about their instructional approaches and classroom challenges. Each interview session lasted approximately 10 to 15 minutes and was comprehensively audio-recorded to ensure data accuracy. To guarantee the research could be replicated, the collected data underwent a rigorous interactive analysis model. First, data reduction was performed by transcribing the audio recordings and filtering out irrelevant information to focus strictly on pedagogical strategies and classroom obstacles. Next, in the data display phase, the extracted information was categorized into core themes (e.g., Interactive Methods vs. Systemic Obstacles). Finally, conclusion drawing was conducted to synthesize the findings and address the research objectives cohesively.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

Based on the systematic interviews conducted with the four lecturers, the findings reveal that the educators at Universitas Pohnuato do not rely on a single, monolithic teaching method. Instead, the implemented strategies can be categorized into two major themes: **Active-Interactive Engagement** and **Cognitive-Visual Scaffolding**.

Regarding the first theme, the lecturers heavily utilized interactive, student-centered approaches. For example, collaborative techniques such as group discussions, pair work, and role-plays were dominant in the classrooms. One lecturer specifically emphasized engaging students through continuous question-and-answer sessions to force them to practice speaking publicly. Furthermore, drilling and reading aloud were used to reinforce phonetics and fluency. To support these interactive strategies, lecturers utilized authentic materials, such as popular English songs, movies with subtitles, and English language podcasts, thereby exposing students to real-life linguistic scenarios.

Regarding the second theme, cognitive-visual scaffolding was prominently applied. Lecturers integrated visualization techniques using digital media platforms like Canva and PowerPoint presentations. This strategy aimed to transition students from passive listeners to active participants by visually stimulating their comprehension of abstract grammatical and vocabulary concepts.

Despite the rich variety of strategies, the results exposed severe implementation obstacles. The most prominent barrier was classroom management disrupted by large class sizes. When interactive activities were deployed, the high volume of students inevitably caused uncontrollable noise, leading to a loss of focus. Linguistically, lecturers faced students suffering from a severe

lack of vocabulary mastery, resulting in immense nervousness and a lack of feedback during Q&A sessions. Additionally, a lack of interpersonal communication among students stalled cooperative learning tasks. From an infrastructural standpoint, the absence or malfunction of LCD projectors and unstable Wi-Fi signals frequently sabotaged visualization and authentic listening strategies.

3.2 Discussion

The findings clearly indicate that while lecturers are theoretically well-equipped with modern EFL methodologies, the gap between theory and practical execution in regional universities is heavily dictated by systemic constraints. The utilization of interactive methods—such as group discussions, pair work, and authentic material exposure—aligns perfectly with Richards' communicative language teaching principles, which argue that language is best learned through authentic interaction [10]. However, as observed, integrating these strategies in classes with a large number of students often backfires, turning active learning into counterproductive noise. This corroborates the findings of Ningsih (2020), who noted that stimulating active learning requires strict, well-balanced classroom management, which becomes nearly impossible when capacity limits are exceeded [7].

Furthermore, the linguistic obstacle—specifically the lack of vocabulary—fundamentally paralyzes the question-and-answer strategy. When students lack the basic lexical repertoire to comprehend instructions or express thoughts, they resort to silence due to anxiety. This reflects Tumanggor's (2018) assertion that speaking skills require high cognitive concentration, which is easily disrupted when students feel linguistically insecure [14]. To bypass this, visualization strategies were introduced. Visualization theoretically aids cognitive absorption by providing visual context to unknown vocabulary. Tragically, this innovative approach is frequently rendered useless due to poor facility management, such as broken LCDs or poor internet signals. This technological deficit highlights a crucial administrative failure: universities cannot demand 21st-century, professional teaching outcomes from their lecturers if they fail to provide 21st-century instructional infrastructure. Ultimately, an effective teaching strategy is not just about the lecturer's competence but relies heavily on a supportive ecosystem encompassing manageable class sizes and adequate learning facilities.

4. Conclusion

This research concludes that the English lecturers at Universitas Puhuwato proactively employ a diverse range of pedagogical strategies—including interactive approaches, visualization, cooperative learning, role-play, drilling, and question-and-answer sessions—to foster an engaging learning environment. These methods are theoretically sound and

designed to enhance communicative competence. However, the successful implementation of these strategies is significantly hindered by prominent obstacles: severe classroom management challenges exacerbated by excessively large class sizes, students' critical lack of basic vocabulary, poor peer-to-peer communication, and a lack of essential technological facilities like LCD projectors and stable internet connections. To optimize these teaching strategies, it is imperative for the university administration to limit class capacities and aggressively upgrade instructional infrastructure.

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