



## Investigating Difficulties Faced by Lecturers in Teaching General English

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### Abstract

This research aimed to investigate the challenges encountered by the lecturer in delivering English language instruction to non-native speakers at a privately-owned institution in Sidenreng Rappang. The methodology employed for this study was a qualitative case study. The study involved a single English lecturer who expressed willingness to undergo interviews and observations while facilitating teaching and learning activities. The data was collected through interviews and observation as the primary research instruments. Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the collected data. The findings of the thematic analysis indicate that English language instructors encounter challenges in the course of delivering their pedagogical duties: 1) The need for more student engagement in the learning process; 2) Inadequate implementation of pedagogical strategies; 3) Insufficient provision of academic support; 4) Delayed submission of student assignments. The inference can be drawn that the students encountered challenges in comprehending the subject matter presented by the teacher due to the predominant use of the English language. The diminished level of student engagement during the educational experience can be attributed to the hybrid learning process, which combines in-person and remote instruction.

**Keywords:** Difficulty; teaching general English; university students

### Introduction

English has been mandated as a mandatory subject in primary and secondary schools and in higher education in Indonesia. The efficacy of teaching English as a foreign language in Indonesia has been constrained. Prior studies have indicated that English as a foreign language instruction in the Indonesian setting has encountered significant challenges, including inadequate teacher proficiency and insufficient students' language skills. The instruction of the English language holds significant significance in terms of an individual's professional accomplishments. As a language not native to the speaker, English language exposure is limited for students inside and outside the classroom since English is not a medium of instruction for

language acquisition, nor is it commonly employed as a means of communication during social interactions. The lack of presence in this regard imposes a significant obligation on English educators to guarantee that pupils acquire knowledge (Martina, et al. 2021).

The aim of teaching and learning English is to foster a conducive atmosphere for the acquisition of English language skills and to facilitate the integration of effective language learning strategies within the educational setting. The significance of teachers' language proficiency, among other intricate competencies, cannot be overstated in instructing English as a second language (Songbatumis, 2017). In this instance, educators of the English language as a second language must employ innovative methodologies and select effective tactics to facilitate students' ability to articulate their thoughts during the learning experience within the confines of the classroom.

Prihantoro and Hermawan (2021) argue that attaining English language proficiency in academic settings, such as schools and universities, cannot be considered a success. In Indonesia, English is mandated as a mandatory subject at all secondary education levels owing to its recognition as the primary foreign language. Nonetheless, English is assigned a relatively lower degree of importance within the nation. The English language is taught for 45 minutes four times per week. The availability of English language courses in certain universities may be limited, with some institutions offering such courses only once a week and for a restricted number of credits .

In general, the act of instructing English as a second language to non-native speakers is a challenging undertaking. Locating appropriate instructional materials can pose a challenge; however, a plethora of resources and methodologies can be efficacious for educators and learners. For non-native speakers, one of the challenges of English is its limited case system, which differs from many other languages. This system does not provide clear markers for identifying the recipient and the transferred object. What are the reasons behind the difficulty in acquiring proficiency in a foreign language? The task is arduous due to its dual demands on cognitive faculties (i.e., the brain's need to develop novel cognitive frameworks) and material resources (i.e., the necessity of prolonged and consistent practice).

Numerous research works have been conducted in the field of foreign language instruction. Cahyaningrum (2016) provides a comprehensive account of

the efficacy of the "reciprocal peer teaching method - learning cell" in facilitating the acquisition of listening skills in the context of English as a foreign language and enhancing soft skills. This approach involves organizing students into small groups to facilitate collaborative learning, where they engage in discussions and share listening strategies to accomplish the tasks assigned by their instructors effectively. This collaborative learning activity was to cultivate soft skills, including but not limited to teamwork, mutual respect for differing opinions, a sense of belonging, a sense of responsibility, and leadership, all positive character traits for students to develop.

Secondly, Winanta et al. (2020) found that talk is vital in classroom interactions in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) as it aids teachers in constructing interactive teaching and learning activities. The research involved the participation of a seasoned female English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructor at the senior high school level. The data were obtained via various methodologies, including direct observation, audio recording, and interview sessions. The findings revealed that out of the 12 talk, the teacher utilized 9 of them.

Fitriani et al. (2017) showed that nearly all students experienced negative emotions while learning English as a foreign language. The factors that incited the adverse emotions among the students were attributed to their English proficiency, the complexity of the English materials, the mode of presentation of the English materials, and the rapport between the students and their English instructor and peers. The study revealed that adverse emotions had a significant effect on students' academic performance, resulting in behaviors such as passivity, reduced concentration, decreased motivation, and diminished self-assurance.

Forth, Wahyuni (2021) reported that the global spread of the Covid-19 virus has significantly impacted the education system. Several nations, Indonesia included, have opted for virtual education across primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. Moreover, within the context of Industry 4.0, social media has become an integral component of contemporary social existence. Educators leverage social media platforms to facilitate online English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. Drawing from the findings, it can be inferred that college students studying English as a foreign language exhibit a pessimistic outlook toward online language acquisition amidst the Covid-19 pandemic.

Sari (2019) discovered that learning difficulties in students can be attributed to internal and external factors. The academic literature suggests that certain internal

factors may impact a student's ability to learn English, including but not limited to lower levels of cognitive ability, limited aptitude for English language courses, reduced inclination toward learning, and diminished motivation to acquire English language skills. The students fulfill their academic duties and submit assignments solely to achieve good grades rather than to attain proficiency in English as a global language, which is relevant in contemporary times. The present study highlights the external factors that impede the acquisition of English language proficiency among students, namely the absence of a conducive environment that fosters the use of English both within the household and the community, coupled with the dearth of opportunities to apply the language in real-life situations beyond the confines of the classroom.

Finally, According to Budiman and Apriani's (2018) study, the lecturers assumed principal responsibility in the classroom, as demonstrated below: According to theoretical frameworks, there exist eight distinct roles that instructors must undertake to teach speaking skills effectively. It is incumbent upon lecturers to fulfill these roles. The study involved gathering students' viewpoints regarding the impact of lecturers on enhancing their communication abilities. The findings demonstrated that the presence of lecturers in the academic setting can significantly influence students' communication skills. Subsequently, the researcher discovered that the students held favorable perceptions regarding the lecturer's ability to enhance the communication skills of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students when assuming a distinct role. Notwithstanding, Lecturers A and B are generally perceived positively by most students. However, when these lecturers assume the roles of needs analysts and managers, students tend to hold a neutral perception.

As mentioned earlier, the studies indicate a need for more literature about the challenges encountered by English instructors while teaching English to undergraduate students enrolled in English departments. Hence, the researcher expressed interest in conducting a study that sought to investigate the difficulties encountered by English lecturers in teaching the language to his students.

## **Research Method**

The study employed a qualitative case study research design. Moleong (2000), Palys & Atchison, Creswell (2017), and Ary, Jacobs, Irvine, and Walker (2018) have expounded that qualitative case study methodology is employed in research

to examine a particular phenomenon within a specific context, utilizing a variety of data sources. This methodology utilizes diverse perspectives to investigate the phenomenon, uncovering numerous dimensions of it. The research methodology employed under consideration is a qualitative case study. This approach involves an in-depth analysis of a particular phenomenon, in this case, the difficulties encountered by an English lecturer in teaching English as a foreign language.

The study involved a single English lecturer who expressed willingness to undergo interviews and observations while facilitating teaching and learning activities. The information gathered from the interviews consisted of responses provided by the lecturer in response to inquiries posed by the researchers utilizing an interview guide. The interviews were conducted in person with the lecturer and subsequently presented by the researchers as interview excerpts. The excerpt from the interview delineates the participant's responses about the challenges encountered while instructing English as a second language. Meanwhile, the observation was conducted to support the data gathered from the interview

The present study provides a detailed description and explanation of excerpts obtained from interviews with informants. The data analysis was conducted utilizing the theoretical framework proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014). The procedures mentioned above-involved data reduction, presentation, and summarization. Initially, the interview transcription underwent a process of summarization and coding. Subsequently, the information was in textual format. Subsequently, a conclusion was derived

## **Findings and Discussion**

### **Findings**

Based on the results of data analysis, four themes emerged: 1) The need for more student engagement in the learning process; 2) Inadequate implementation of pedagogical strategies; 3) Insufficient provision of academic support; 4) Delayed submission of student assignments.

### **The need for more student engagement in the learning process**

The findings obtained from the interviews conducted with the participants revealed that the level of interest exhibited by students towards TEFL courses or the instruction of English as a second language was limited to a maximum of 60%. This phenomenon may be attributed to the prevailing pandemic circumstances, which have necessitated reduced classroom-based learning. Consequently, students may need more motivation or enthusiasm due to the absence of face-to-face instruction.

The findings of the interview are consistent with the observations made. Based on the findings of the observations, it is evident that a significant proportion of students need more eagerness when engaging in the educational process. Some students engage in independent activities within the classroom setting

### **Inadequate implementation of pedagogical strategies**

Based on the observation, it was found that The teaching method used by the lecturer in Teaching English is the lecturing method in which the form of presentation of teaching materials is through explanations and oral narratives by lecturers to students about the material being taught. So, when the lecturer teaches using the lecturing method, students can pay attention and receive well what is being explained by the lecturer.

The findings indicate that the lecturer exhibited more significant levels of activity relative to the students, who were passive and primarily focused on the teacher. The students appear to be obligated to adhere to all instructions imparted by the teacher, despite the presence of critical students who perceive the teacher as infallible. The students exhibited signs of ennui and drowsiness, as the pedagogical approach employed was predominantly teacher-centered, with the students assuming a passive role in the learning process, merely absorbing the information disseminated by the instructor.

According to the interview, the lecturer employed lecturing techniques due to their ease of implementation, ability to cover a substantial amount of material, the opportunity to highlight critical concepts and straightforward logistics for class organization. The lecturing method of teaching involves imparting knowledge to students through auditory means. Students comprehend the information the teacher/lecturer presents by actively listening to the discourse. The lecturing method

imparts a wide range of informational materials, including concepts, understandings, and principles, in the learning process.

### **Insufficient provision of academic support**

According to the lecturer's interview, inadequate support could be a potential challenge in teaching English. The ability to provide support is a prospective attribute that educational institutions possess when executing a program, particularly in facilitating the implementation of a pre-established curriculum. The concept of supporting capacity refers to the presence of infrastructure facilities that facilitate the educational process of the respective educational institution. As per the guidelines set forth by Depdiknas in 2008, educational institutions must provide appropriate facilities and infrastructure to meet the competency requirements of their students. These facilities may include libraries, laboratories, and other tools and materials necessary for the learning process.

Additionally, schools need adequate personnel, effective management practices, and a commitment to the well-being of all stakeholders involved. A positive correlation exists between the carrying capacity and the score assigned, whereby a higher carrying capacity corresponds to a higher score. In comparison, a lower carrying capacity corresponds to a lower score. Regarding the provision of carrying capacity during the learning process at the University of Muhammadiyah Sidenreng Rappang, it is sometimes unavailable, including but not limited to LCD projectors, well-equipped classrooms, and traditional blackboards. If the participant requires access to a liquid crystal display (LCD) or if the instructional space is not consistently accessible to the participant at their convenience.

### **Delayed submission of student assignments**

Based on the findings of the interviews, the students who engaged in blended learning or remote learning experienced a delay in completing their assignments. The difficulty relate to challenges posed by unstable internet connectivity, which sometimes hindered the submission of assignments online. While it is true that not all students exhibit a slow pace in completing assignments, a subset of students tend to take longer to finish their tasks.

## Discussion

As mentioned above, the findings revealed several challenges educators encounter when instructing English as a second language. One notable aspect is the level of enthusiasm students exhibit toward acquiring English language skills in a classroom setting. *Enthusiasm* towards learning is fervent passion and a keen interest in educational pursuits. The disposition towards learning with eagerness, drive, and inspiration that originates intrinsically within individuals without external influence refers to enthusiasm for learning. In acquiring knowledge, students must be enthusiastic about comprehending the subject matter.

The present study found the predominant pedagogical approach employed by the lecturer is the lecture method. A *lecture method* is a pedagogical approach that involves instructors disseminating educational content through verbal elucidation and narrative discourse to learners regarding the subject matter under consideration. When employing the learning method, the lecturer can effectively capture students' attention and facilitate their comprehension of the presented material. During academic lectures, the lecturer may utilize various visual aids, including but not limited to photographs, diagrams, tangible objects, or simulated materials. The instructional approach employed in the context places a significant emphasis on the verbal discourse of the instructor. Hence, it is imperative for the lecturer to effectively employ vocal delivery and clear speech while utilizing the lecture method to impart knowledge. The lecturer's utterances should be comprehensible to the students, and the delivery should be varied to ensure optimal utilization of the lecture method (Lufri, et al, 2020)

The lecturing method has advantages and disadvantages, while the advantages of the lecture method include: a) Practitioners in terms of preparation; b) Efficient in terms of time and cost; c) Can deliver a lot of material; d) Encourage teachers to master the material; e) Easier to control the class; f) It is easier to control the class; g) Students do not need preparation; h) Students immediately receive knowledge. Then, the weaknesses of the lecturing method namely a) Teachers are more active while students are passive because attention is only focused on the teacher; b) Students seem to be required to follow everything that is conveyed by the teacher, although there are students who are critical because the teacher is considered to be always right; c) Students will be more bored and feel sleepy,



because in this method, only the teacher is active in the teaching and learning process, while the students just sit quietly listening to the explanation that has been given by the teacher (Oktavianti, et al, 2018; Kapur, 2020; Yulia, 2013; Bonwell, 1996).

The capacity to provide support in the context of teaching is of significant importance. The ability of educational institutions to effectively execute a program, particularly in facilitating the implementation of a pre-established curriculum, is commonly referred to as supporting capacity. The concept of supporting capacity refers to the presence of infrastructure facilities that facilitate the educational process of the respective educational institution. Hence, when the instructor conducts the pedagogical process through direct face-to-face interaction, requisite resources such as an LCD or whiteboard are consistently existed.

Furthermore, a potential issue that may arise in academic settings is the delay of students in completing their assigned tasks. Based on the insights gathered from the interviews conducted with the respondents, it was revealed that the integration of both traditional face-to-face learning and online learning, particularly through the utilization of the Zoom application, has resulted in a potential decrease in the efficiency of students in completing their assignments. This is particularly evident in the current context where remote learning has become the norm, and assignments are predominantly submitted through online platforms. The unstable network connectivity experienced by students during the submission of their assignments further exacerbates this issue.

## **Conclusion**

Based on research it is imperative to draw several conclusions. Specifically, the lecturer expressed difficulties teaching English as a foreign language: 1) The need for more student engagement in the learning process; 2) Inadequate implementation of pedagogical strategies; 3) Insufficient provision of academic support; 4) Delayed submission of student assignments. The inference can be drawn that the students encountered challenges in comprehending the subject matter presented by the teacher due to the predominant use of the English language. The diminished level of student engagement during the educational experience can be attributed to the hybrid learning process, which combines in-person and remote instruction

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