

Empowering Classroom Interaction: Innovative Teaching Techniques by English Teachers at Islamic High School Students

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Abstract

This study explores the effectiveness of innovative teaching techniques in enhancing classroom interaction and student engagement in an Islamic high school setting. Employing a qualitative research approach, observations and interviews were conducted with English teachers and students at SMA Islam Guppi in Kota Sorong. The findings reveal that structured explanations, interactive learning through questioning and group work, effective classroom management, positive reinforcement, and task-based learning contribute significantly to student motivation and participation. These techniques align with key educational theories, such as Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, Mercer's Sociocultural Theory, and Schunk's Self-Regulated Learning Theory. The study underscores the importance of adaptable teaching strategies that accommodate diverse learning needs and foster an engaging educational environment.

Keywords: Teaching Technique, Classroom Interaction, English Subject, Islamic School

INTRODUCTION

Teaching techniques refer to the specific methods or strategies employed by educators to effectively deliver lessons and achieve desired learning outcomes. These techniques are essential skills that teachers must possess, as they enhance the ability to teach effectively. According to (Rumintjap, 2015), a technique is a strategy or method used by teachers during the teaching and learning process to achieve specific goals. The more appropriate the method chosen by the teacher, the more effective the learning experience will be. This aligns with (Vygotsky's, 1978) sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the importance of scaffolding and tailored instructional strategies to support students' learning within their zone of proximal development (ZPD).

Teachers are expected to accommodate the diverse needs and characteristics of their students. By understanding each student's unique traits, educators can tailor their teaching methods to ensure that students grasp the material being taught. This idea is supported by (Tomlinson's, 2014) theory of differentiated instruction, which highlights the need for teachers to adapt their techniques to meet the varying readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles of students. In essence, teaching techniques are the deliberate efforts, methods, or approaches used by teachers during classroom instruction to present and reinforce learning materials, ultimately helping to achieve educational objectives.

Literally, a technique is a way of implementing or practicing a method. In teaching, it serves as a tool for delivering selected materials to students. The chosen technique must align with the subject matter and complement the overall teaching approach. (Richards and Rodgers, 2014) emphasize that techniques are operationalized through methods, which are derived from broader approaches to language teaching. In the context of learning, techniques are defined as the methods and tools used by teachers to achieve specific goals during the delivery of a lesson.

In summary, a technique is a way of accomplishing something, while teaching involves imparting knowledge to students. Teaching techniques, therefore, are the specific methods used by educators to conduct the teaching process, whether inside or outside the classroom, to present and reinforce learning materials and achieve desired outcomes. These techniques are grounded in theories such as (Vygotsky's,

1978) ZPD, (Tomlinson's, 2014) differentiated instruction, and (Richards and Rodgers, 2014) framework for language teaching methods.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative method. It is an approach oriented toward phenomena or naturally occurring events, often referred to as field studies or naturalistic inquiry (Meleong, 2017). Additionally, an analytical approach is applied to gain deeper insights into these teaching techniques. The collected data is systematically organized, interpreted, and analyzed to draw conclusions about the subject under study. The study focuses students at SMA Islam Guppi in Kota Sorong, located on Jalan Jend. Sudirman Pasar Baru, Malabutor, Kecamatan Sorong Manoi with an English Teacher as the respondent. The instruments used for data collection were observation and interviews. The researcher played a central role in analyzing the collected data. As (Miles and Huberman, 1994) outline, qualitative data analysis involves three steps: data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions/verification.

RESULT

Effective classroom interaction is a fundamental aspect of successful language learning. This study examines the innovative teaching techniques employed by English teachers at an Islamic high school to enhance student engagement and motivation. The observations conducted from March 9 to March 13, provide insights into various instructional strategies that foster interactive learning environments.

1. Structured Explanations to Enhance Comprehension

A well-structured explanation plays a crucial role in helping students grasp language concepts effectively. The teacher introduced new material with clear explanations, detailing social functions, generic structures, and language features. For instance, during the first observation, the teacher explained descriptive text in a worksheet, ensuring students understood its elements before assigning them a writing task. This structured approach ensured that students comprehended the material thoroughly, making it easier for them to apply their knowledge practically. Assignments given at the end of lessons further reinforced learning and encouraged student participation. The clarity and organization of instruction led to heightened engagement and motivation in the learning process.

In supporting the result, the interview data revealed the respondent noted that time availability for teaching English is limited, which can impact the depth of instruction. As stated:

“According to me time for teaching English is not enough.”

This suggests that structured and concise explanations become even more critical in maximizing learning within limited timeframes.

2. Interactive Learning through Questioning and Group Work

Encouraging student interaction through questioning techniques and group activities was a key strategy employed by the teacher. By prompting students with questions, the teacher stimulated active listening and participation, fostering a collaborative environment. For example, in the second observation, the teacher asked students to listen carefully to explanations of descriptive text and then answer verbal questions. Students eagerly participated and received praise for their responses. Group work assignments, particularly those focused on vocabulary exercises and verbal responses, allowed students to learn from each other and enhance their communication skills. This interactive approach not only improved students' confidence but also increased their enthusiasm for learning English.

In line with the data finding for this technique, the data interview found the respondent highlighted the importance of motivation in the learning process:

“According to me a teacher is one of the important things that can build the soul of educators.”

This aligns with the observed interactive techniques that encouraged student engagement, enthusiasm, and peer learning.

3. Effective Classroom Management for Sustained Engagement

Classroom management is essential in maintaining a productive learning environment. The teacher skillfully handled classroom dynamics by employing creative discipline strategies, such as asking disruptive students to sing English songs. This approach effectively redirected student focus and reestablished order without discouraging participation. In the third observation, the classroom became noisy, but the teacher allowed the situation for a few minutes before intervening with a storytelling method about a boy struggling to meet his mother. This captivated students' attention and fostered deeper engagement with the material. By allowing controlled flexibility in the classroom, the teacher successfully balanced discipline with student interaction.

In the interview section, the respondent emphasized the need for strategic classroom management, particularly in diverse educational environments:

“According to me in the world of education, a teacher must have a broad strategy in order to adapt to students as well as mixed circumstances or environments and as a teacher must also have patience in dealing with students.”

This reinforces the importance of teachers adopting flexible and adaptive strategies to maintain classroom order and engagement.

4. Positive Reinforcement and Non-Verbal Cues

Using praise and non-verbal cues proved to be a powerful tool for maintaining student motivation. The teacher consistently offered verbal affirmations such as "good work" and "good performance," as well as non-verbal encouragements like smiling and giving a thumbs-up. In the fourth observation, the teacher praised students regardless of their performance quality to maintain their motivation. By offering subtle feedback, the teacher ensured that students remained confident and engaged. These techniques helped create a supportive classroom atmosphere where students felt valued and encouraged to participate. Additionally, the teacher provided constructive feedback in a subtle manner to maintain students' confidence while guiding them toward improvement. This approach reinforced positive behavior and sustained motivation throughout the learning process.

The interview data showed the respondent acknowledged the challenges teachers face in maintaining a smooth learning process and emphasized the need for strategies to overcome obstacles:

“According to me difficulties in the learning process and the instructor does have difficulties but when he wants to become an educator must also have a good strategy so that students have no obstacles at all.”

This aligns with the importance of positive reinforcement as a strategy to keep students motivated despite challenges.

5. Task-Based Learning for Practical Language Use

Task-based learning methods helped students engage with the material in a meaningful way. Activities such as writing descriptive texts, answering questions verbally, and performing dialogues made learning more interactive and application-based. In the fifth observation, after explaining the topic of asking and offering help, the teacher assigned students a conversation-writing task, which they later performed. This real-world application of language skills encouraged active participation. The use of applause and praise after each performance further boosted their confidence and willingness to participate. This hands-on approach effectively enhanced both comprehension and practical

language skills. Supporting interview data, the respondent highlighted the importance of student-teacher interaction in the learning process:

“According to me the learning process there must be interaction between students and students and the teacher so that the learning process they can understand what is explained by the teacher.”

This supports the effectiveness of task-based learning, as it fosters direct interaction between students and teachers, leading to improved comprehension and engagement.

The observations and interview results indicate that English teachers at Islamic high schools effectively employ a variety of innovative teaching techniques to promote classroom interaction. Structured explanations, interactive questioning, classroom management strategies, non-verbal reinforcement, and task-based learning all contribute to a dynamic and engaging educational experience. These approaches not only enhance language acquisition but also foster a supportive and interactive learning environment that motivates students to actively participate in English lessons.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study align with several key learning theories that emphasize the role of social interaction, reinforcement, and structured instruction in effective language teaching. The combination of structured explanations, interactive learning techniques, and positive reinforcement utilized by English teachers at the Islamic high school supports well-established pedagogical theories while also presenting a unique perspective within an Islamic educational context. Mercer’s (2013) Sociocultural Theory provides a strong foundation for understanding the impact of interactive learning. His concept of socially shared cognition suggests that students learn best through interaction with teachers and peers. The teacher’s use of questioning techniques and group work aligns with this theory, as students engaged in collaborative learning to construct knowledge with the assistance of their peers and instructors.

Similarly, Kirschner, Sweller, and Clark’s (2006) Cognitive Load Theory reinforces the importance of structured guidance before allowing students to work independently. The teacher’s structured explanations and gradual transition from guided tasks to independent application reflect their argument that students learn best when instructional materials reduce cognitive overload and provide clear guidance. Likewise, Schunk’s (2012) Self-Regulated Learning Theory, particularly the concept of goal-setting and feedback, is evident in the teacher’s use of positive reinforcement, including verbal praise, gestures, and rewards. Schunk argued that students develop motivation and confidence when they receive constructive feedback and engage in self-monitoring of their learning progress.

Ellis’s (2005) Second Language Acquisition Theory further supports the effectiveness of structured explanations. Ellis emphasized the role of input and interaction in language learning, where comprehensible input, supplemented with tasks and real-life examples, facilitates student comprehension and engagement. The findings also resonate with Larsen-Freeman’s (2011) Dynamic Systems Theory, which underscores the importance of adaptability in language teaching. The teacher’s use of group work, verbal questioning, and task-based activities exemplifies communicative strategies that prioritize meaning-making and fluency. This approach enhances confidence among students, making learning more dynamic and practical.

Additionally, Ushioda’s (2009) Motivational Theories in Language Learning highlight the role of teacher influence in shaping student motivation. The respondent’s interview responses emphasize the importance of teacher enthusiasm and engagement, aligning with Ushioda’s assertion that motivation emerges from personal goals and meaningful classroom interactions. The teacher’s positive reinforcement, interactive activities, and strategic classroom management contributed to an environment where students felt encouraged and eager to participate.

While these theoretical frameworks support the study’s findings, challenges such as limited teaching time and classroom management difficulties were also observed. Nation’s (2007) Four Strands Model stresses the importance of balancing meaning-focused input, output, fluency development, and

language-focused learning. The results indicate that teachers must integrate structured instruction with flexibility to accommodate diverse learning needs. The use of storytelling as a classroom management technique reflects an innovative approach to maintaining engagement without resorting to punitive measures. Moreover, Anderson's (2005) Revised Bloom's Taxonomy provides insight into how the instructional strategies employed in this study address various cognitive levels. The structured explanations support lower-order thinking skills such as comprehension and knowledge retention, while group discussions and task-based activities promote higher-order skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the use of innovative teaching techniques enhances student engagement and language acquisition in English language classrooms. Structured explanations help students grasp language concepts more effectively, while interactive learning methods, such as questioning and group work, foster collaborative learning. Effective classroom management strategies ensure a balanced and disciplined learning environment, while positive reinforcement maintains student motivation. Additionally, task-based learning promotes practical language application, making the learning experience more dynamic and meaningful. Despite these successes, challenges such as limited instructional time and classroom management difficulties remain. Addressing these challenges requires strategic planning and continuous adaptation of teaching methods to better meet student needs. Future research should explore the long-term impact of these teaching techniques on student learning outcomes and language proficiency. Comparative studies could be conducted in different educational settings, including public and private schools, to assess the transferability of these techniques.

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