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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Investigating English Teachers' Teaching Style on Students' Engagement in EFL Classrooms

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Abstract: This research aimed to discover: (1) the teaching styles applied by the English teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Bone, and (2) the most influential teaching styles toward students' engagement at SMA Negeri 1 Bone. A qualitative methodology was utilized, with two English teachers and eight students serving as the subjects. Data were collected through observation, audio-video recording, and interviews. They were analyzed using a qualitative approach based on the four-step process outlined by Miles and Huberman: data collection, data display, data condensation, and conclusions-drawing/verifying. The results of the research revealed that (1) the English teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Bone applied three teaching styles, namely expert style, formal authority style, and facilitator style and the dominant teaching styles used by the first teacher were expert and facilitator style while the dominant teaching style used by the second teacher was formal authority style and facilitator style (2) the researcher elaborated students' engagement into three categories such as behavioral engagement (e.g., participation, attention), emotional engagement (e.g., enthusiasm, mood), and cognitive engagement (e.g., thinking critically, problem-solving). The most influential teaching style on student engagement was the facilitator style, which emphasizes teacher-student interaction. When students are actively involved in the learning process and the teacher employs diverse teaching strategies, students become more interested in learning. Furthermore, the teachers attempted to create an engaging learning environment by incorporating games and humor, which improved student engagement.

Keywords: Teaching styles, Engagement, EFL Teacher.

1. INTRODUCTION

Multiple factors contribute to success in learning English, with the teacher playing a pivotal role (Sun et al., 2021) (Lamb, 2017). As a role model in implementing educational programs, the teacher holds significant influence in determining students' achievement in English learning. The teacher's function extends beyond being an information provider; they also serve as a facilitator, motivator, and evaluator for students (Sun et al., 2021) (Lamb, 2017).

Teachers play a crucial role in creating an effective learning environment by regulating classroom discipline and implementing appropriate instructional methods (Vibulphol, 2016). Effective learning is facilitated through cooperation between teachers and students, where the teacher explains the material clearly and systematically, and the students actively engage with the content. Teaching style is one of the key determinants of learners' success in the learning process.



While some students in EFL classrooms may attend classes based on how the teacher presents the material, it is not always an easy task for teachers to sustain students' attention throughout the entire class period. (Yan, 2019) (Hilas & Politis, 2014). Instead, teachers must find ways to actively engage students and make the learning experience more interactive and engaging. High school students, in particular, have grown up in an era of information fragmentation, making it difficult for them to focus for extended periods.

Teachers must carefully consider their teaching styles and how they can effectively cater to the diverse needs and interests of their students. Some may employ a more authoritative style, while others foster a more interactive and collaborative classroom environment. A teacher's personal and distinctive teaching style is influenced by various factors, such as their teaching experience, personality, and educational background (Lamb, 2017). Therefore, teaching style has a close relationship with students' learning engagement.

Effective teaching styles are essential in shaping students' learning engagement and academic success. A teacher-centered approach, which emphasizes direct instruction and rote learning, may not effectively engage and motivate all students. On the other hand, a student-centered approach that encourages active participation, cooperative learning, and self-directed exploration can better foster intrinsic motivation and a love for learning (Gomberg & Gray, 2000).

Building on the previous explanation, the researcher aimed to conduct a study entitled "Investigating English Teachers' Teaching Style on Students' Engagement in EFL Classrooms". Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following questions.

- a. What are the teaching styles applied by the English teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Bone?
- b. From those teaching styles, which of the most influential teaching styles toward students' engagement at SMA Negeri 1 Bone?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Teaching Styles

Grasha (1996:3) defines teaching style as a distinct set of instructional needs, beliefs, and behaviors that teachers consistently display in the classroom. He elaborates that the teaching style is multifaceted, involving how teachers deliver content, engages with students, manages tasks, oversees coursework, integrates students into their discipline, and mentor them. Teaching styles, therefore, reflect the lasting personal traits and practices teachers bring to their classroom management and instructional approach. In this way, a teacher's style both characterizes them and shapes their instructional methods, which in turn influences students' learning experiences. Based on this understanding, teaching style can be seen as the way a teacher tailors their behavior to meet student needs. This concept encompasses the techniques, approaches, and activities a teacher applies to address challenges in the teaching-learning environment, with each teacher's style being deeply rooted in their individual personality, varying distinctly from one individual to another.

Various frameworks have been proposed to classify teaching styles, each with its own advantages. Although numerous teaching style typologies exist, this study centers on the approach outlined by Grasha. Grasha (1996:154) described five teaching style categories in his models, based on the prevalent aspects of the instructor or trainer's presence in the classroom and the metaphors of role models he regarded as relevant. These categories are as follows: The Expert style, in which the teacher demonstrates extensive knowledge and encourages students to improve their understanding by sharing expertise and fostering competence. The Formal Authority style, which is a teacher-centered approach emphasizes the teacher's role in directing content delivery, providing feedback, and establishing learning objectives and behavioral expectations. The Personal Model style, also teacher-centered, involves the teacher exemplifying the skills students are expected to acquire. The Facilitator style focuses on interactive teacher-student engagement, with the teacher guiding students

who take responsibility for achieving specific goals. Finally, the Delegator style, a student-centered method, entrusts control and accountability for learning to the students, either individually or in groups.

2.2. Engagement

Fredricks et.al. (2004) characterized engagement in education as the extent to which learners and educators demonstrate commitment and investment in their work. It is classified into three categories: behavioral engagement (e.g., participation, attention), emotional engagement (e.g., enthusiasm, mood), and cognitive engagement (e.g., thinking critically, problem-solving). Engagement is viewed as a broad concept encompassing various facets, such as the dedication, focus, and willingness of learners and educators to utilize their skills, strategies, or activities to enhance their performance.

Fostering student engagement is a paramount concern for educational institutions, as it directly impacts learning outcomes, academic success, and the overall well-being of the student population. The topic of student engagement has been attracting increasing amounts of attention in the field of education, with researchers highlighting the vital importance of engaging students in educational activities if they are to retain what they learn (Burch et al., 2015). While students have a responsibility to create their own opportunities for engagement, institutions should be intentional about how they allocate and employ resources to foster engagement and develop a process that results in improved student outcomes.

3. Method

This study utilized a qualitative research approach. The researcher employed this methodology to collect and analyze data that aligned with the aim of the investigation, which was to identify the teaching styles employed by English teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Bone and determine the most influential teaching styles on student engagement at SMA Negeri 1 Bone. The participants in this research were two English teachers and eight students from SMA Negeri 1 Bone.

Data were gathered through direct observation and interviews. The researcher observed English lessons to witness how teachers applied their teaching styles and the resulting impact on student engagement. Interviews were utilized to supplement information about the teaching styles employed by English teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Bone.

The researcher employed qualitative data analysis techniques based on the four-stage framework proposed by Miles and Huberman, which involves data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

4. Results

4.1. Teaching styles applied by the English teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Bone

The researcher employed audio and video recordings to document the teaching styles of the teachers. The recordings were conducted in a relaxed and natural manner, as the participants were familiar with the researcher. Observations were carried out from July 2024 to August 2024. Additionally, the researcher interviewed eight students as informants to obtain detailed information to support the data collected.

1) Expert style

During each class session, the teachers introduced the lesson materials at the start. The first teacher explicated "Suggesting and Offering", "Active Conversation", and "Writing Connection" through a gradual explanatory approach. Similarly, the second teacher elucidated "Chapter 2 (Why don't you visit Seattle?)", "Speaking Practice", and "Descriptive Text" via explanation. The students exhibited engagement and focus, positive affect, enthusiasm, and preparedness in response to the instructional content.

2) Formal authority style



The teacher predominantly utilized a formal authority teaching style, which involved posing questions to students and then providing feedback such as "very good," "good," "excellent," "amazing," and offering applause. This approach was aimed at making students feel valued and cared for, which could enhance their engagement and foster a positive attitude. The teacher primarily applied this style during "Suggesting and Offering," "Active Conversation," and "Writing Connection" activities, particularly in the question-and-answer sessions or when clarifying student responses that were less precise.

3) Facilitator style

The facilitator-led approach aimed to actively engage students in the learning process. This involved the teacher posing questions to students, providing options, and guiding them to comment on the discussed topics. This facilitation style was predominantly used in teaching "Speaking Practice", "Active Conversation", "Descriptive Text", and Chapter 2 (Why don't you visit Seattle?), with the intent of boosting student participation in the classroom. As a result, the students felt enthusiastic, content, and empowered to express their ideas.

This research found that teachers used various teaching styles, including expert, formal authority, and facilitator styles. The facilitator style emerged as the dominant approach, where teachers guided students through explanations, examples, and fostering independent and collaborative learning. Grasha (1996) identified that the expert style involves conveying knowledge and expertise, while the formal authority style is teacher-centered with the teacher controlling content delivery. The facilitator style emphasizes personal teacher-student interaction, prompting questions, exploring options, and encouraging students to develop their own criteria and decision-making. This teaching style promotes active learning, collaboration, and problem-solving through group activities.

In addition to the teaching styles outlined in Grasha's theory, analysis of the recordings and observations revealed that the teacher further sought to cultivate a positive learning environment by incorporating elements of fun, such as games or casual humor, into the instructional activities. This suggests the teacher's intentional efforts to make the class more enjoyable and engaging for the students. Incorporating fun elements into instructional activities can foster student engagement with course content. For instance, the teacher may utilize humor or compelling examples to elucidate key concepts or integrate games and other interactive exercises to diversify the lesson format. Such an approach can help sustain student attention and engagement in the subject matter.

4.2. The most influential teaching style toward students' engagement in the classroom

The researcher examined student engagement using both observation and interviews, categorizing it into three main types. The findings indicated that engagement among students at SMA Negeri 1 Bone falls into behavioral engagement (such as participation and attentiveness), emotional engagement (such as enthusiasm and mood), and cognitive engagement (such as critical thinking and problem-solving) (Fredricks et al., 2004). Behavioral engagement is considered a foundational component of learning, involving concentrated attention on a specific task. Several class observation videos—specifically, videos 1, 2, 3, and 5—highlighted instances where students were focused on the lesson and concentrated on the material. Additionally, students actively participated in the learning activities.

The second type of engagement, emotional engagement, appeared predominantly in recordings 1, 2, 3, and 4. This form of engagement reflects how students prepare to participate in the lesson, show enthusiasm, maintain concentration during activities, and stay focused when the teacher presents material. The third type, cognitive engagement, was observed in class recordings. During these sessions, some students demonstrated critical thinking in response to case studies, group problem-solving tasks, or "think-pair-share" exercises provided by the teacher.

The results suggest that students were more engaged in learning when they were actively involved, when the material was meaningful and suitably challenging when they had a degree of independence and choice, and when they received both academic and emotional support. A mix of relevant content, active learning strategies, constructive feedback, and a supportive classroom environment is crucial for enhancing engagement. Teachers who build personal connections with students and create interactive, student-focused learning activities typically promote greater engagement. At SMA Negeri 1 Bone, the facilitator's teaching style had the strongest influence on student engagement. This style highlights teacher-student interaction, where the teacher is guided by asking questions, exploring possibilities, suggesting options, encouraging decisions based on criteria, and addressing individual student needs and goals.

5. Conclusions

The study found that the English teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Bone utilized a variety of teaching styles, including the expert style, formal authority style, and facilitator style. The first teacher predominantly employed the expert style and facilitator style, while the second teacher primarily adopted the formal authority style and facilitator style. The formal authority style emphasizes the teacher's role as the primary source of knowledge and authority in the classroom, while the facilitator style focuses on encouraging student participation. Additionally, the teachers attempted to create an engaging learning environment by incorporating games and humor, which proved effective in maintaining students' engagement. The findings suggest that teaching styles can be adapted based on the specific dynamics of the classroom.

The most influential teaching style toward students' engagement at SMA Negeri 1 Bone was the facilitator style, which emphasizes teacher-student interaction. Students become more interested in learning when they are actively involved in the learning process and the teacher employs a variety of teaching strategies. The facilitator teaching style allows for cooperative learning, where students work together to achieve learning goals.

The researcher provided the following suggestions based on the conclusion: The students show engagement in learning when teachers employ diverse teaching styles and actively engage students in the learning process. Therefore, English teachers are encouraged to utilize various teaching strategies and modify their teaching styles. It is expected that teachers recognize the importance of adopting appropriate teaching styles and adjusting to the students' needs and classroom situations to foster an enjoyable learning environment where students feel interested and comfortable. For future research, the researcher recommends that other researchers conducting similar studies consider additional factors or variables related to the topic to enhance the reliability and comprehensiveness of the data.

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