

ANALYSIS OF EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES IN LANGUAGE TEACHING FOR STUDENTS AT MI PULUTAN SALATIGA

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze effective language teaching strategies for students at MI Pulutan Salatiga, focusing on methods that enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. A descriptive qualitative approach was used to understand the application of different teaching methods, with data collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The findings show that interactive teaching methods such as group discussions and role-playing are more effective than conventional methods, such as lectures and memorization, in increasing student participation and comprehension. Challenges faced in implementing interactive methods include limited facilities, teacher skills in classroom management, and differences in students' learning abilities. Students' responses to interactive methods were very positive; they felt more motivated and confident in using the language in contextual settings. Based on these findings, it is recommended that MI Pulutan increase support for the use of more varied methods and provide training for teachers to optimize the learning process. Creative and interactive teaching strategies have been proven to have a significant impact on the development of students' language skills, which is crucial in supporting their academic achievements and communication abilities in the future.

Keywords: Effective strategies, Language Teaching, Teaching for Madrasah Student

INTRODUCTION

Language teaching at the elementary school level, especially in a madrasah environment like MI Pulutan, plays an important role in forming the

foundation of students' language skills. At this age, students are in a critical phase of language development, where they quickly absorb new knowledge and skills, including effective

communication skills (Umayah & Riwanto, 2020). However, challenges in language teaching, especially in selecting the right strategy, are issues that need to be addressed to ensure that the learning process can proceed optimally.

The education system at MI Pulutan includes teaching Indonesian, Arabic, and English. Each language has its own characteristics and challenges in teaching, thus requiring diverse strategies to be effectively delivered to students (Rihlahsyita & Rahmawati, 2022). Indonesian serves as the medium of instruction in various subjects, while Arabic has relevance to religious education, which is the core of madrasah education. Meanwhile, English is a foreign language that needs to be introduced as an additional valuable skill.

The use of effective teaching strategies is crucial in the language learning process so that students not only master vocabulary and language structures but also use the language in real-life contexts (Hendri, 2017). However, at MI Pulutan, conventional methods such as lectures and memorization are still often found, which are limited in increasing student engagement and motivation. As a result, language learning outcomes are often less satisfactory, especially in terms of students' ability to communicate actively (Hidayat & Malihah, 2023).

An effective language teaching approach should accommodate the

different learning styles of students (Alhafiz, 2022). Every student has a different learning style—visual, auditory, and kinesthetic—which affects how they absorb and understand material (Widayanti, 2013). Teachers need to use a variety of strategies to accommodate these needs so that each student has an equal opportunity to understand and master the language being studied. However, in reality, some teachers still find it difficult to apply these varied strategies, mainly due to time and resource constraints (Yanti & Marlina, 2022).

The limitations of facilities and infrastructure at MI Pulutan are one of the main challenges in implementing more varied language teaching strategies. The availability of learning aids, such as multimedia devices, is still limited, so teachers often rely on lecture methods, which tend to be monotonous. In fact, the use of visual media and interactive learning technology can increase students' interest in learning, especially in language learning, which requires contextual understanding and hands-on practice (Mamase, 2019).

In addition, the burden of the curriculum also affects the teaching strategies applied by teachers. The dense curriculum often makes teachers focus on completing material and meeting curriculum targets, so the implementation of innovative and creative teaching methods is often overlooked. This makes the learning process less flexible and does not

provide enough room for students to explore the language in depth and contextually (Hidayat & Nursikin, 2023).

Differences in students' ability to understand the language also pose a challenge in teaching. Students who quickly understand the material often feel bored due to the lack of challenges, while those who struggle require more attention (Salsabila et al., 2020). Teachers need to apply differentiation strategies, namely adjusting teaching methods and materials to the students' learning abilities, so that all students can develop optimally. However, this strategy is rarely implemented consistently due to the various obstacles faced by teachers.

The importance of using interactive learning methods, such as group discussions and role-playing, in language teaching has been widely discussed in educational literature. These methods allow students to be actively involved in learning and practice using the language in real situations. At MI Pulutan, the implementation of these methods is still limited, mainly due to a lack of training and understanding of how to apply more interactive teaching strategies that suit students' needs.

Technological advances today provide opportunities for teachers to enrich their language teaching strategies (Kusumawati et al., 2022). The use of learning applications and educational videos can help students

understand the language in a more interesting and contextual way (Aeni et al., 2022). However, another challenge faced is the readiness of teachers to utilize this technology. Many teachers do not yet have sufficient skills or training to use technology effectively in teaching, so the potential of technology as a teaching aid has not been fully optimized at MI Pulutan.

In addition to facility limitations and challenges in implementing interactive strategies, parental involvement is also an important factor in the success of language learning (Dakhalan, 2016). Parents who are actively involved in their child's learning process can provide the moral and material support needed for students to practice at home (Maisaroh & Wathon, 2018). However, many parents of MI Pulutan students do not yet understand the importance of their role in supporting their children's language learning at home, especially due to educational background and time constraints.

With the growing need for language skills, MI Pulutan needs to develop a more holistic approach to language teaching, which not only focuses on vocabulary and grammar mastery but also on effective communication skills. This involves developing teaching strategies that connect theory with practice, so students can see the relevance of language learning in their daily lives.

To address these challenges, it is essential for MI Pulutan to establish better communication channels between teachers and parents, emphasizing the value of parental involvement in language learning. Workshops and seminars could be organized to educate parents on how they can contribute to their child's learning process, even with limited time or resources. By fostering a community where parents and teachers work together, the school can create a more supportive environment that encourages language practice beyond the classroom.

Moreover, MI Pulutan should consider integrating technology into its teaching methods to bridge the gap between home and school learning. Tools such as educational apps or online platforms could be used to provide additional language exercises, allowing students to practice independently while still receiving guidance from teachers. This approach would not only enhance students' engagement but also allow parents to observe and support their children's progress more effectively. With these combined efforts, language learning at MI Pulutan can be made more comprehensive and impactful, preparing students to communicate confidently in various real-life contexts.

METHODE

This study used a qualitative approach with a descriptive method to

understand the language teaching methods applied at MI Pulutan Salatiga. The research aimed to describe the implementation of language teaching methods, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and understand their impact on student learning outcomes in this elementary school.

The research was conducted at MI Pulutan Salatiga, chosen to understand the specific language teaching methods applied in a religious-based elementary school environment. The research subjects included language teachers and students from grades 1 to 6. Five teachers were selected based on their experience and active involvement in language teaching, while 20 students were chosen through purposive sampling to represent different grade levels and learning abilities.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, direct classroom observations, and document analysis. Interviews were conducted with teachers to learn about the methods used and the rationale behind their selection. Observations were carried out to directly examine the teaching process, particularly the implementation of teaching methods and the interaction between teachers and students. Document analysis involved reviewing teaching materials and lesson plans (RPP) to understand how the teaching methods were designed in the curriculum.

The instruments used in this study included interview guides,

observation sheets, and field notes. The interview guide contained questions regarding the language teaching methods, the challenges and benefits experienced by teachers, and the effectiveness of the methods in increasing student participation. The observation sheet recorded classroom interactions, including student engagement and responses to the methods used.

To ensure data validity, triangulation techniques were employed by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and document analysis. Member checking was also conducted with the interviewed teachers to confirm the accuracy of the data and interpretations. Peer debriefing was carried out with fellow researchers to evaluate the research results and ensure valid interpretations.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION **Effectiveness of the Applied Teaching Methods**

The teaching methods frequently applied at MI Pulutan Salatiga, such as lectures and memorization, are effective for conveying basic information, particularly in the context of Arabic language learning, which requires mastering vocabulary and grammar thoroughly. These methods provide a solid foundation in terms of repetition and memory reinforcement. However, their effectiveness tends to decline when used continuously

without incorporating other varied methods, as students become passive and lose interest. This can hinder student engagement in the learning process and reduce their understanding of the language's contextual usage.

On the other hand, more interactive methods, such as group discussions and role-playing, offer a more enjoyable learning experience for students. These methods involve students in actively using the language in real situations, which ultimately helps them understand the meaning and use of vocabulary in relevant contexts. Students are more likely to absorb the learning because they can directly practice what they have learned, thereby increasing their confidence and communication skills.

During the teaching process, group discussions proved effective in engaging students actively and encouraging them to share ideas. Through this method, students listen to various perspectives from their peers, which enriches their understanding of the material being taught. Using discussion also helps teachers identify the extent to which students understand the material, as teachers can observe how students express their thoughts during the discussions.

Role-playing, as a teaching method that involves physical activity and interaction among students, significantly enhances student enthusiasm and participation. When students can play roles relevant to the

material being taught, they not only learn vocabulary but also learn how to use the language in real-life conversations (Ariska, 2020). This aligns with constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of direct experience and active student involvement in the learning process (Muzakki, 2021).

Supporting Table for Effectiveness of Teaching Methods which illustrates the effectiveness of each language teaching method applied at MI Pulutan Salatiga, based on observation and interviews:

Table 1 Effectiveness of the Applied Teaching Methods

No	Teaching Method	Frequency	Effectiveness	Advantages	Disadvantages
1	Lecture	High	Moderate	Efficient for delivering basic concepts and new material	Less engaging for students; students tend to be passive
2	Memorization	High	Low-Moderate	Quick vocabulary acquisition	Boring for students; lacks context

3	Group Discussion	Moderate	High	Actively involves students; improves critical thinking and communication skills	Time-consuming; requires good classroom management
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Challenges in Implementing Interactive Teaching Methods

Although interactive teaching methods are highly beneficial, their implementation at MI Pulutan Salatiga faces various challenges. One of the biggest challenges is the limitation of facilities and infrastructure at the school. Many classrooms are not equipped with modern learning technologies such as projectors or multimedia devices, which can support the use of interactive media in language learning. As a result, teachers often resort to conventional methods that do not maximize students' potential to understand the language in an enjoyable way.

In addition to technology limitations, the packed curriculum also

poses challenges for teachers in implementing varied teaching methods. The time available for each lesson is often insufficient to implement interactive methods like group discussions or role-playing in depth. Teachers feel compelled to focus on completing material according to curriculum targets, making them more inclined to use lectures, which are considered more efficient for using class time (Huda, 2022).

Another challenge is the diverse learning abilities of students within a single class. Some students may quickly grasp the material and show enthusiasm for learning, while others need more time and attention to understand the concepts being taught. This disparity requires teachers to adapt their teaching methods to accommodate all students' needs so that no one falls behind.

To address these challenges, support from the school and government is needed in the form of providing adequate facilities and training for teachers. Training on the use of technology and creative teaching methods would greatly assist teachers in optimizing the teaching process (Tekege, 2017). Additionally, flexibility in implementing the curriculum is needed so that teachers have more space to apply learning methods that focus on student participation and understanding.

The challenges in implementing interactive methods also involve the

teachers' readiness in planning and managing the class effectively. Interactive methods like group discussions and role-playing require teachers to have good classroom management skills to ensure students stay focused and that the learning objectives are achieved. Without proper planning, interactive activities can become disorganized and lose their essence, potentially reducing the effectiveness of the learning process. Therefore, teachers need to receive special training on how to facilitate interactive activities efficiently.

Moreover, student participation in interactive activities can be hindered by individual differences in characteristics. Some students tend to be shy or lack confidence to participate in group discussions or role-playing in front of their peers. This requires a sensitive approach

from the teacher, who needs to create a supportive and safe classroom environment where all students feel comfortable participating. Providing appropriate motivation and encouragement, as well as fostering an inclusive atmosphere, will greatly help increase student participation in interactive learning methods.

To further foster an inclusive atmosphere, teachers should also be mindful of the individual strengths and weaknesses of each student. Differentiated instruction, which involves tailoring teaching approaches to fit the diverse needs of students, can

help ensure that every learner feels valued and capable of success. Teachers might provide extra support for those struggling, while also offering enrichment activities for more advanced students. This kind of personalized attention not only builds students' confidence but also ensures that no one is left behind, ultimately leading to a more engaged and cohesive classroom environment.

Additionally, collaborative learning should be encouraged to promote peer support and teamwork among students. Group activities can be structured in such a way that students of different abilities work together, allowing them to learn from one another. By promoting peer interactions, students not only improve their language skills but also develop critical social competencies such as empathy, leadership, and effective communication. This sense of community learning can strengthen relationships within the classroom, making the learning process more enjoyable and impactful for everyone involved.

Student Responses and Implications for Future Teaching

The study's findings show that students responded very positively to interactive teaching methods. They felt more motivated when the teacher used visual aids, role-playing, and group activities. This demonstrates that learning involving direct experience

and social interaction is very effective in enhancing student motivation. These methods help students connect the material to real life, ultimately making learning more meaningful rather than merely theoretical (Hidayat et.al, 2023).

Furthermore, using play-based activities and contextual methods helps students better understand the material and develop their communication skills. For instance, when students are asked to take on roles in everyday conversation scenarios, they learn how to use vocabulary appropriately in real-life situations. Such activities help students feel more comfortable speaking and experimenting with a new language, ultimately boosting their confidence.

However, despite students' positive responses to interactive methods, challenges still exist for teachers in ensuring that every student can actively participate. Some students who tend to be shy or lack self-confidence often face difficulties in participating actively, particularly in activities like role-playing in front of their peers. Teachers need to pay more attention to these students by providing opportunities in smaller groups before involving them in larger class activities. A gradual approach like this can help students feel more comfortable and increase their participation over time.

The implication of these findings is the need for improving teachers' skills in managing interactive activities, especially those that can accommodate

the diverse characteristics of students. Training on creating a supportive classroom environment where each student feels safe and comfortable to participate is crucial. Furthermore, it is important for the school to encourage teachers to continue innovating with various teaching strategies so that students can have richer learning experiences. By doing so, language teaching at MI Pulutan can have a greater impact on students' communication skills and language mastery overall.

In addition to teacher training, the curriculum itself should be revisited to ensure that it provides enough opportunities for interactive and communicative activities. The curriculum should include a balance of individual, pair, and group work that allows students to explore language in different contexts. This diversity in activities can help address the varying needs and learning styles of students, making language lessons more inclusive and effective. Teachers should also be equipped with the skills to adapt these activities for students who may need additional support or a more challenging approach, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to succeed.

Another important aspect is the evaluation system. The current focus on memorization and written tests should be complemented by more performance-based assessments, such as presentations, role-plays, or group

projects. These forms of evaluation will allow students to demonstrate their language skills in practical settings, providing a better measure of their communication abilities. By incorporating assessments that reflect real-life use of language, MI Pulutan can motivate students to apply what they have learned in meaningful ways, thereby making language education more relevant and impactful.

CONCLUSION

Based on this study, it can be concluded that interactive and activity-based language teaching strategies, such as group discussions and role-playing, are more effective in enhancing student engagement and understanding at MI Pulutan compared to the lecture and memorization methods that are still predominantly used. Despite challenges in implementation, such as limited resources, teacher skills, and varying student abilities, the use of interactive methods has succeeded in creating a more engaging and relevant learning environment for students. To achieve more optimal results, support from the school, adequate facilities, and training for teachers are needed so that they can develop creative and effective teaching methods, thereby allowing language learning to have a significant impact on students' communication skills development.

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