

TEACHERS' PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES IN APPLYING INTERACTIVE TEACHING METHODS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

Ruli Astuti, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo
Email: ruli.astuti@umsida.ac.id

Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the implementation of **Interactive English Teaching Methods** in elementary schools in Sidoarjo, the types of interactive methods used by teachers, and the challenges in applying these methods. A **descriptive qualitative approach** was employed, involving classroom observations and interviews as the primary data collection methods, supported by secondary data from books, journals, articles, and other references. Data were analyzed using **Miles and Huberman's framework**, including data reduction, data display, triangulation, and drawing conclusions. The findings revealed that teachers applied various interactive teaching methods, including **role-playing, project-based learning, storytelling, games, Total Physical Response (TPR), discussions, presentations, and demonstrations**. These methods aimed to enhance students' speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills while fostering engagement, collaboration, and confidence in using English. However, teachers faced several challenges in implementing interactive methods. These included **limited time allocation, students' low confidence and lack of vocabulary, uncooperative behavior during group activities, difficulties in teaching certain materials using TPR, and student boredom**. The study concludes that interactive teaching methods can create an engaging and effective learning environment for elementary English learners, but successful implementation requires careful planning, classroom management, and strategies to overcome both student- and system-related challenges.

Keywords: Interactive English Teaching, Teacher Practices and Challenges, English Language Learning, Elementary School

Pendahuluan

English is the first foreign language officially taught in Indonesia for several years (Arana, 2023). English is implemented across all levels, beginning from elementary school and continuing through higher education

(Adisti et al., 2022). By mastering English, children will eventually become proficient in communicating with others on international level or activities that use English as the medium of instruction (Herdyastika & Kurniawan, 2020). Hence, it is essential

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for English teachers to master appropriate teaching methods to help students gain meaningful and effective communication experiences in learning.

Mastering various kinds of teaching methods is very important for English language teachers in order to provide effective communication learning experiences. In this case, teaching children requires a special approach and planning; teachers need to use appropriate and engaging methods so that students can follow the learning process. The methods, materials, and scope of learning must be appropriate for the students' developmental stages (Abdurazakov, 2022), as each student has different developmental stages. Children in different age ranges will naturally have different cognitive development, and learning that aligns with the students' cognitive stages will help them understand and process the material well. By aligning teaching methods with the students' age, a relevant and enjoyable learning environment will be created. Teachers also need to understand students' characters and learning styles to create effective learning (Juhana, 2014). Every child has a different learning style; some students may be more inclined to have a visual learning style, while others are more responsive to learning through movement and audio. When teachers are able to meet students' learning needs, it will certainly help students

develop their potential optimally. Appropriately implemented teaching methods will result in effective and efficient learning activities, allowing students to understand lessons more quickly (Ningsih, 2021). Additionally, teachers need to use various teaching methods to make students more enthusiastic in learning activities (Maili & Hestningsih, 2017). Effectiveness in teaching young learners is related to the teacher's competence in using various learning strategies and activities which adapted to students' interests.

English language learning in elementary school is generally designed to introduce children to simple English and vocabulary recognition. English language learning at the elementary level generally aims to provide students with an introduction through existing contexts and situations (Pertwi et al., 2021). The goals of foreign language learning are essentially the same as those of the mother tongue, namely to improve understanding and speaking skills to be able to communicate effectively (Türkben, 2019).

Mastering English at the basic level provides a strong foundation for students to continue developing their language skills to higher levels. However, in reality, there are still many challenges faced by teachers in English language learning in elementary schools. The main challenge often faced by teachers in teaching English is that

some students feel shy or lack confidence when speak in English. Additionally, teachers also face issues related to low student motivation in learning English (Faridatuunnisa, 2020). Given these constraints, teachers should use appropriate learning strategies to create effective learning. It can be done using innovative methods, as innovative methods are important for improving learning in the classroom (Aasriya, 2021).

Innovative and creative learning methods are learning strategies to enhance student learning and engagement, implemented both inside and outside the classroom. In its implementation, the role of the teacher is very important in creating a more engaging learning environment (Melati, 2023), where students feel motivated, enthusiastic, and excited in the learning process. During the teaching and learning process, students sometimes get bored with the classroom atmosphere, so special strategies are needed to create enjoyable learning. In this case, the best way to improve learning effectiveness is by using interactive methods (Nafosat* et al., 2019).

Interactive methods are very important methods in language learning (Yusupovna, 2023). Interactive methods have several advantages, including the ability to stimulate students to communicate, think, and be enthusiastic about

learning (Yusupovna, 2023). Students can influence each other, interact, and contribute to creating a positive learning environment (Eltanskaya et al., 2017). By using interactive techniques and strategies, the students become more engaged in learning; retain more information, thus becoming more satisfied (Senthamarai, 2018). The use of interactive teaching methods in English language instruction allows for instilling interest in the language being learned; creating a positive attitude toward learning the language; stimulating students' independent speech-cognitive activity; and increasing positive motivation in foreign language learning among students. The interactive method is the right strategy to improve learning effectiveness (Nafosat et al., 2019), because the application of interactive methods can create a dynamic and enjoyable learning environment. This aligns with the implementation of the independent curriculum, which promotes a fun learning atmosphere and creates a positive environment for students and teachers (Nadhifah, 2023). The concept of independent learning provides an understanding that learning is not limited to the classroom, but can be done outside the classroom using various interactive media and learning models (Tri Astuti et al., 2022)

A fun learning atmosphere can be created by actively involving students in the learning process thru discussion,

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collaboration, and participation in interactive activities. Interactive methods can be implemented in various ways, such as pairing students, individual work, group activities, or teamwork (Nafosat* et al., 2019). Interactive methods in English language learning can be implemented through role-playing, projects, brainstorming, and games. For example, if a teacher wants students to learn words quickly, the teacher can assign them to write down words they don't know the meaning of and create a role-playing game (Rasulova, 2021). Role-playing involves students in simulating specific situations or roles, where they can apply their knowledge and skills in a real-world context. This encourages active student engagement, collaboration, and critical thinking skills. Another method that teachers can use in implementing the interactive method is Total Physical Response (TPR). Total Physical Response (TPR) is one of the foreign language teaching methods widely used for preschool and elementary school children (Rasulova, 2021). In the TPR method, the teacher gives verbal instructions and asks students to perform physical actions that correspond to those instructions. In this context, students not only listen to and understand the teacher's words or instructions, but are also directly involved in performing physical movements related to those instructions. This method helps create a positive attitude toward language

learning, making students feel happy and enthusiastic about learning new material (Xalilova, 2021).

This study aims to determine the implementation of interactive teaching methods in English language learning in elementary schools, the types of interactive methods used by teachers, and to analyze the inhibiting factors in learning using interactive teaching. This research is expected to provide recommendations for English language teachers to improve the implementation of interactive teaching methods in English language learning in elementary schools.

Research Method

This study used descriptive qualitative method. This qualitative research was chosen to facilitate the description and analysis of data containing information about the implementation of interactive teaching methods used by English teachers in several elementary schools in Sidoarjo. This study began with classroom observations carried out during the teaching and learning process using observation sheets. In addition, data were collected through interviews, which aimed to gather more comprehensive and in-depth information from the English teacher regarding the teaching strategies applied and their implementation. This research was conducted in four elementary schools in Sidoarjo, all of which have implemented the Merdeka

curriculum. The main data were obtained through observations and interviews, whereas secondary data included materials such as books, journals, articles, and other relevant references. The data analysis was conducted following Miles and Huberman's framework, which involves data reduction, data display, triangulation, and drawing conclusions (Walliman, 2006). During the data reduction stage, the researchers refined, categorized, focused, eliminated unnecessary information, and organized the data to facilitate drawing final conclusions. At this stage, the raw data collected from classroom observations and interviews were condensed to highlight the key points relevant to the research objectives. In the data display stage, the purpose was to organize and present the relevant information clearly, which was done in the form of narrative text. During the triangulation stage, the data were verified, clarified, and validated (Suwartono, 2014:76). This involved a process of cross-checking and comparing the observational field notes with the interview findings. The final stage was drawing conclusions, where key points relevant to the research questions were summarized and interpreted.

Result and Discussion

Implementation of Interactive English Teaching Methods in Elementary Schools

Based on the interviews, it was found that the interactive teaching methods used by the teachers varied according to the material being taught. These are the interactive teaching methods applied by the teachers:

1. Role Playing

Role-playing is a depiction of a situation where students play a specific role or character thru a scenario. (Bahriyeva, 2021). The teacher employed the role-playing strategy during speaking lessons, for example, on the topic of professions. Students were given the task of creating a simple conversation and practicing it in front of the class. English teacher explained that in language classes, students were expected to use the language for communication and writing activities as outlined in the lesson plan. Each group typically consisted of two to three students. The teacher often incorporated interactive strategies in her lesson plans to effectively achieve the learning goals. Teachers use this method for various reasons, including that it makes students more motivated and earnest in participating in learning activities, and they become more confident in practicing conversation/speaking activities in the classroom. Although it takes time and is not an easy process, students who initially feel shy will eventually become

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more confident because they are used to practicing speaking in front of the class. The use of role-playing in learning has various advantages, it can create a positive atmosphere and increase students' motivation to learn. By involving students in specific roles, teachers can create a more engaging and interactive learning experience, ultimately improving the language learning process (Bahriyeva, 2021). Role-playing can provide an interactive and engaging learning experience for students, which aligns with the underlying concepts of the Merdeka Curriculum. In the Merdeka Curriculum, it is important to provide learning experiences that allow students to actively participate in learning activities.

2. Project

Assigning projects to students is an interactive English teaching method often used by teachers. This project assignment is done by teachers by adjusting the material being taught. Projects are assigned to students individually or in groups. Solving projects in groups involves collaboration among friends and results in a product. This naturally involves a cooperative process in handling problems together with groupmates. In other words, thru the collaboration process, students work together to build a uniform concept in order to complete the project (Wiaris, 2021). An example of a project given by the

teacher to the students is the students were tasked with creating a snake and ladder project related to the *Taste* material. In assigning this project, the teacher stated that students found it easier to understand the learning material because they were directly practicing creating a work related to the topic being discussed, thus preventing boredom and fostering greater independence. The project assigned by the teacher was practiced by the students, who were then asked to give a presentation in class. It is done so that students can be active and improve their self-confidence. Additionally, this project is believed to create a fun atmosphere in learning activities, preventing students from feeling bored. A pleasant and student-centered classroom atmosphere will undoubtedly lead to improved learning outcomes. This aligns with the research findings by Yuvita et al., which state that project-based learning is an effective method for increasing student activity and improving learning outcomes (Yuvita et al., 2023). Assigning projects to students in groups can encourage collaboration and teamwork. This aligns with the principle of the independent curriculum, which emphasizes cooperative learning. The presentation activity conducted by students after completing the project not only creates an interactive learning experience but also boosts students' self-confidence. Increased self-confidence is one of the goals of the

independent curriculum, which focuses on students' personal development.

3. Story telling

Interactive English teaching method most frequently used by teachers is storytelling. According to the teachers' explanation, storytelling is used by teachers in speaking lessons, where students are asked to tell stories based on the topic being discussed during the learning activity. In implementing storytelling in learning activities, teachers are naturally proactive in guiding and accompanying students, such as introducing new English vocabulary, providing input for creative ideas to be used in stories, giving examples of simple stories in the form of videos or images, encouraging and strengthening students' mental state during presentations, and also rewarding students who present their storytelling with confidence to attract the interest of their peers. According to the teacher's explanation, storytelling can sharpen students' writing and reading skills, as well as their speaking and listening abilities. Before the students told their stories, they were asked to summarize the stories they read, it was able to train their writing skills. After summarizing the stories, the students told their own stories in front of the class, while the other students listened to the stories presented by their friends. Storytelling activities, if done frequently in learning activities, will train students' language

skills, improve their pronunciation, boost their confidence because they have to tell stories in front of their classmates, and make students more creative (Firdaus et al., 2023). In storytelling activities, it involves summarizing stories, presenting stories in front of the class, and listening to stories. This reflects the concept of active learning in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. The role of the teacher as a facilitator in learning, guiding students to introduce new vocabulary and providing creative input, is a form of teacher involvement in helping students reach their potential (Daga, 2021).

4. Games

Games are used by teachers in learning activities by forming teams. The game that is usually used by teachers and most liked by students is the guessing game. Teachers often use guessing games for animal, fruit, and profession topics. For the animal material, students played a guessing game with clues related to animal physical characteristics, sounds, food, and habitats. For the fruit material, students had to guess the names of fruits based on clues related to fruit color, taste, and shape. For the profession material, students guessed the type of profession based on keywords written on the cards. According to the teacher's explanation, using games in learning can make students more active in participating in

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learning activities. The use of games in English language learning can improve students' speaking skills. (Saputri et al., 2022). Additionally, using games can increase student participation in enjoyable activities because students use English in communicative situations relevant to the topics being studied, and it can also reduce student anxiety (Nainggolan et al., 2022). The guessing game is an interesting method that can increase student activity. This aligns with the learning principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes student activity. Using learning topics such as fruit, animals, and professions is a manifestation of contextual learning that is in line with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum.

5. TPR

TPR is a teaching method that emphasizes the importance of physical involvement in language learning. The TPR method focuses on giving students instructions to perform specific movements that support understanding of the vocabulary being learned (Widyatmoko et al., 2023). The TPR method used by the teacher in learning activities is to coordinate speech and action. In other words, the teacher introduces vocabulary by demonstrating it directly, followed by the students. The teacher uses TPR when teaching vocabulary related to daily activities by giving simple instructions that are easy for students

to understand. According to the teacher's explanation, the use of TPR makes it easier for students to understand vocabulary. This method can make students more active in learning activities, and students are also more motivated to participate in learning activities. Because in this TPR, the teacher teaches vocabulary directly thru movement and context, making students more focused on the material or vocabulary they are learning (Widyatmoko et al., 2023). With the TPR method, students feel happy during learning activities. The application of this method is able to change students' perception of learning English vocabulary, making English vocabulary easier to understand and remember (Safira et al., 2022). The TPR method, which emphasizes physical movement in learning vocabulary, makes learning more enjoyable, aligning with the interactive concept of the Merdeka Curriculum. Introducing vocabulary related to daily life creates learning that is contextual and relevant to students' lives. This aligns with the principle of the independent curriculum, which emphasizes the timeliness of the material. The implementation of TPR is able to change students' perceptions of English vocabulary learning, making vocabulary learning easier to understand and remember. This creates a positive learning experience, aligning with the principles of implementing the independent

curriculum, which emphasizes joy in learning (Dewi & Astuti, 2022) .

6. Discussion

Discussion is one of the methods used by teachers to stimulate students' English-speaking skills. This discussion method is used by teachers when teaching upper-grade students (grades 5 and 6). The discussion was conducted by forming groups, with each group consisting of 2-3 students. The teacher chooses simple topics, such as favorite animals, favorite foods, and favorite songs. Each group was asked to write down their favorite food and why they liked it. Each group presented their work, and the other groups were given the opportunity to ask simple questions related to the material presented by the other groups. According to the teacher's explanation, if discussion activities in English language learning are consistently incorporated into the learning process, they are very helpful for students in improving their speaking skills. By asking students to write down their favorite foods, give presentations, and participate in discussions, students acquire a lot of new vocabulary. Discussions can increase student activity in learning and boost their self-confidence. When students participate in discussions, they are not just passive listeners, but can share their opinions and interact with other classmates (Vetoshkin et al., 2022). The discussion method provides students with the opportunity to

actively participate in learning activities by sharing opinions and communicating with classmates, which aligns with the principle of implementing the independent curriculum that emphasizes student activity. The selection of discussion topics such as favorite animal, favorite food, and favorite song is relevant to students' daily lives. The discussion was conducted by forming small groups as a manifestation of collaborative learning. This aligns with the independent curriculum approach, which emphasizes empowering students thru cooperation and interaction within groups.

7. Presentation

Presentation activities are implemented by teachers in both upper-grade (grades 4, 5, 6) and lower-grade (grades 1, 2, 3) learning activities. For upper grades, presentation activities are usually done on daily life topics. Students are asked to write about their holiday experiences or activities from the previous day, and then they are asked to present in front of the class. For lower grades, for example, a teacher might apply this to the topic of family. The teacher asks students to write the names of their family members, and then the students are asked to present in front of the class. By implementing presentation-based learning, students become more active, and this activity can train their courage to present in front of the class. Presentations can be a motivation for

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students to improve their speaking skills, as when giving a presentation, students are given the opportunity to convey the information or ideas they have, thus increasing their self-confidence (Ati & Parmawati, 2022). Presentation activities in learning train students to convey information and ideas accurately. Presentation materials linked to students' daily lives and experiences are relevant to the principle of the independent curriculum, which emphasizes the meaningfulness of the material. Giving students the opportunity to share their ideas or experiences can create intrinsic motivation and develop their self-confidence, aligning with the values of the Merdeka Curriculum. Through presentation activities, students are not only passive listeners but they also share their individual ideas and experiences.

8. Demonstration

The demonstration method is used by the teacher to show or demonstrate an activity. For example, in the material on describing animals, the teacher shows animal pictures and provides examples of how to pronounce the words or sentences accompanying the pictures, asking students to imitate the teacher's pronunciation. This activity is repeated until the students can pronounce the words or sentences correctly. This activity can make students more proficient in pronouncing vocabulary and make

them more enthusiastic about participating in learning. The application of the demonstration method can improve students' learning outcomes and interest in learning English (Fikrianto, 2023). Additionally, the demonstration method is effective in improving speaking skills, especially pronunciation (Atin et al., 2022). The demonstration method is conducted by actively involving students, such as asking them to imitate words or sentences spoken by the teacher with correct pronunciation. This aligns with the principle of implementing the independent curriculum, which actively involves students and creates an interactive learning environment. Using the demonstration method can make students more proficient in pronouncing vocabulary and increase their enthusiasm for learning, thus creating a positive learning atmosphere.

Challenges Faced by Teachers in Implementing the Interactive English Teaching Method

Some constraints faced by teachers in implementing the Interactive English Teaching Method are:

First, related to time allocation. According to the teacher's explanation, implementing roleplaying takes a considerable amount of time because it requires preparing scenarios and giving clear instructions to each student. Therefore, the teacher must be skilled

at managing time to ensure that the roleplaying activity runs smoothly and learning objectives are achieved. This aligns with Wahyuni's opinion that some weaknesses in implementing the role-playing model include limited execution time, classroom conditions that tend to be crowded or less conducive, and not all students getting the opportunity to play a direct role (Wahyuni, 2023).

Second, students' perceptions of the English subject. A lack of knowledge of English leads to negative reactions such as laughing the English subject. This could be due to their lack of knowledge of English structure, vocabulary, and grammar, which makes students less confident in using the English language. In addressing this issue, teachers continue to teach English well so that students remain motivated to learn English. The efforts made by the teacher include teaching vocabulary related to daily life, frequently introducing vocabulary using songs, and introducing some vocabulary thru storytelling. With these efforts, students become accustomed to using English well, are able to write activities in their diaries, read English books, listen to English songs, and communicate using English in the school environment. Increased self-confidence can be achieved thru intensive speaking practice and a conducive learning environment (Arifatul Aulia & Yusron Maulana El-Yunusi, 2025).

Third, the obstacle faced by teachers is that students are less cooperative during group activities. In one group, there are still one or two students confused about the instructions given by the teacher, which makes the team less cohesive. To overcome this problem, the teacher motivates students to maintain cohesion and pay attention to every instruction given by the teacher. Next, the challenges faced by teachers relate to students' limited vocabulary mastery. At the beginning of the learning activity, the teacher always reviews the material and vocabulary that was learned in the previous meeting. Sometimes students are given the task of memorizing the vocabulary that was learned in the previous meeting.

Fourth, students feel bored. According to the teacher's explanation, not all material can be taught using TPR. The teacher feels difficult if some vocabulary or sentences cannot be taught using TPR, as it limits the opportunities for students to respond physically, making it harder to engage them fully in the learning process. As stated by Fadlan, in applying the Total Physical Response (TPR) method, students learn by listening to the teacher's instructions and imitating thru actions. The teacher provided examples thru words and movements, then encouraged students to speak and demonstrate when they were ready. Additionally, teachers play a role in

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assisting students who haven't understood the instructions and monitoring their English language proficiency development (Fadlan et al., 2021).

Fifth, the students' lack of vocabulary and pronunciation mastery. A common challenge faced by teachers when teaching is related to students' vocabulary mastery; students have not memorized the vocabulary learned in class. Teachers must repeat the vocabulary that has been taught and provide examples of how to pronounce the vocabulary correctly. Students' difficulty in mastering English vocabulary is influenced by two main factors: internal and external factors. Internal factors include physical condition, intelligence level, interest, low learning motivation, and students' habits during learning. Meanwhile, external factors include distractions from friends, uninteresting material presentation, suboptimal use of learning media, and limited supporting facilities and infrastructure (Sucandra, et al., 2022).

Conclusion

The implementation of **Interactive English Teaching Methods** in elementary schools includes various strategies, such as **role playing, project, storytelling, games, TPR, discussion, presentation, and demonstration**. These strategies are applied to enhance students' motivation, engagement, creativity,

confidence, and English language skills, and they align with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes active, contextual, and enjoyable learning. However, teachers face several challenges in implementing these methods, including limited time, students' negative perceptions of English, lack of cooperation during group activities, limited vocabulary and pronunciation skills, and the limitations of certain methods, such as TPR, for teaching specific materials. Both internal factors (physical condition, interest, motivation, learning habits) and external factors (peer distractions, uninteresting material presentation, suboptimal use of learning media, and limited facilities) influence students' learning difficulties. Overall, the application of interactive teaching methods has proven effective in improving students' language skills, self-confidence, and participation, although it requires proper classroom management strategies and material adaptation to overcome the challenges encountered.

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