

THE PROBLEM OF TEACHING ENGLISH IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL-BASED ON TEACHER INVOLVED: EXPLORING TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE

Zulfikar Noor^{1*}, Addinul Kamil Harahap², and Utami Dewi³

^{1,2,3}Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

zulfikar.noor@uinsu.ac.id¹, addinulkamil.harahap@uinsu.ac.id²,

and utamidewi@uinsu.ac.id³

*correspondence: zulfikar.noor@uinsu.ac.id

<https://doi.org/10.24071/llt.v26i1.5708>

received 7 January 2023; accepted 26 April 2023

Abstract

English-teaching problem is an important issue that has been discussing and in diverse contexts around the world, including English teacher problems, students, assessments, curricula and textbooks, and the various variables that contribute to effective English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching, for this reason, the purpose of the study is to explore 10 participants' perspective in issues of teaching English in ELT classroom. This descriptive qualitative study investigated how teachers perceived the English teaching issue based on the teachers involved. Data were collected using a questionnaire that includes a single primary question about the use of Teaching-English issues that were raised by teachers. This study came to three main conclusions: (1) Teachers' emotional control. (2) Personal experience of teachers. (3) The teacher's interest in the character of the pupil. (4) Teaching staff accountability. Finally, Problems with teaching English should not be understated because they have a significant impact on how well students learn the language in elementary schools. To continuously improve their teaching skills without becoming complacent, teachers must be aware of their shortcomings.

Keywords: English teachers' problem, issue of English teaching, teacher professional development

Introduction

English-teaching problem is an important issue that has been discussing and in diverse contexts around the world, including English teacher problems, students, assessments, curricula and textbooks, and the various variables that contribute to effective English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching (Akbari, 2015; Ali & Walker, 2014; Noom-ura, 2013; Rahman et al., 2019). An extensive study on English teaching problems has been conducted in Thailand Noom-ura (2013) discussed the problem of teaching English as a Foreign language in general issue. Also based on teaching speaking problem assessment in Bangladesh (Ahmed, 2018; Islam et al., 2021) and learning in South Africa Malebese and Tlali (2019). A similar issue exists in the context of Indonesia specifically (Gultom, 2015; Songbatumis, 2017; Utami & Astuti, 2021; Yulia, 2013).

There are still far too many widespread issues at schools that have not yet been resolved. Both internal and external factors, as well as teachers' perceptions of their difficulties teaching English, can all be considered contributing factors. Lack of specialized training for teachers in the field of study Pennington and Richards (2016), which the principal should facilitate, a large number of students in the class making it unproductive (Hidayati, 2018; Malik et al., 2021), the numerous assignments given by each teacher in the field of study, ineffective study hours Malik et al. (2021), inadequate textbooks, Curricula and other factors prevent teachers in the class from implementing innovative learning techniques Jon et al. (2021).

The teaching-English problem has been discussed in some general earlier studies related to this topic, as it is mentioned by (Gultom, 2015; Sarihuudin, 2013) reveal that kinds of English language teaching (ELT) problems in Indonesia such as students' lack of motivation, poor attitude toward language learning, big class size, unqualified teachers, cultural barriers for teachers to adopt the new role of facilitator and teaching frequency also matters. The various analyses Jon et al. (2021) provided an explanation of the English language instruction used in Indonesia, The approach used was a qualitative library research design, which necessitated that the author gathers the relevant object materials from earlier studies on related English language teaching. The English curriculum, English teaching techniques, students' attitudes toward English, and teachers' difficulties teaching English in Indonesia are some of the sources used in this study. The study's findings show that students are rarely motivated to learn a language because of how difficult it is, how inadequate the resources are, and how little time and opportunity there is for practice.

The English subject in Indonesia for the elementary school level is very important as it is stated that the English subject in elementary school is one of the elective subjects in the independent curriculum in Minister of Education and Culture No. 67 of 2013. The decision that linear English at the Elementary School level (SD/MI) is legally included under number 56/M/2022 regarding recommendations for how to implement the curriculum in the context of learning recovery. The decision states that contrary to what was stated in the previous curriculum, namely the 2013 curriculum, that is why in the future there will be many challenges that will be faced by English teachers to implement good learning in class because the writer in this research needs to explore the problems experienced by the teacher to avoid mistakes that have the potential to be repeated later

Some issues related to the problem of teaching English comes from Prior, (2019) showed in their study that the emotion of teachers can affect classroom activities and teacher professionalization (Burić & Frenzel, 2019; Dumančić, 2018) revealing teachers' boredom and anger could bring negative teaching effect in ELT classroom. Bad performance of teachers in delivering material and teaching classroom management (Geng et al., 2019; Rinantanti et al., 2019), less concern of teachers for their students' personalities McGrath and Van Bergen (2019) and impact of undisciplined teachers Mercader and Gairín (2020).

However, there hasn't been much research that specifically addresses the issues with English learning in the classroom brought on by the teachers themselves. For this reason, the researchers here concentrate on investigating the issues with English learning in elementary school classes, particularly those brought

on by the teachers themselves and the need for teachers' professional development. At least two questions were addressed in this study, the first of which was what difficulties English teachers, particularly those brought on by the teachers themselves, encounter in the classroom. What are the specific teacher's professional development requirements concerning English teaching issues?

The findings of this study should be able to explain the difficulties English teachers face in the classroom, particularly those brought on by the teachers themselves, and guarantee that elementary school teachers' needs for professional development are met.

Method

This descriptive qualitative study investigated how teachers perceived the English teaching issue based on the teachers involved. Since the authors discovered some intriguing problems regarding English teacher problems teachers' professional development needs, Participants in the study were chosen at random from a group of ten English teachers from various schools in Medan, Indonesia. Three criteria were used to select the participants. (1) having more than three years of experience; (2) teaching English in an elementary school in Indonesia; (3) and having earned a degree in English education. According to the authors, the majority of English teachers believed that one of the issues with teaching English originated with the instructors. In addition, the researchers discovered that English classes received lower grades than the other subject classes. It appears that the professionalism of instructors is influenced by problems they encounter while instructing English. As a result of their inability to perform at their highest level when teaching English in the classroom, teachers' difficulties with the language negatively affect students' learning outcomes. As a result, the authors selected these institutions to investigate the students' difficulties in English-language instruction and to ascertain their views on the demands placed on teachers' professional development needs (Binmahboob, 2020; Hamad, 2017).

The primary source of information for this study was teachers' perceptions, so the authors used a questionnaire to learn how they felt about the issue of English language instruction based on the teachers who were directly affected and the need for professional development. To understand teachers' opinions about the difficulty of teaching English based on those who are involved and their needs for professional development, a questionnaire with open-ended questions was distributed.

Findings and Discussion

Participants in this study answered questions about The Problem of Teaching English Based on Teacher Involvement and Teachers' Professional Development Needs on a questionnaire. There is only one open-ended question only focused on the teachers' problems that arise in their classes. The question is Mention at least 5 difficulties that you as a teacher face when teaching English to students—problems that you have created yourself! After examining the questionnaire responses, commonalities that are thought to be significant and useful to this study emerged. Additionally, the key themes that emerged from this research were (1) Teachers' emotional control, (2) Teachers' knowledge, (3) Teacher's concern for student

personality, (4) Teacher accountability in teaching. Below is a discussion of these ideas.

Teachers' emotional control

Emotions are mental states caused by neurophysiological changes that are variously linked to thoughts, feelings, behavioral reactions, and a level of pleasure or annoyance. Prior (2019) mentioned in their study that teacher identities, classroom activities, and teacher professionalization are fundamentally influenced by emotions. Starting with this problem, I discovered that many teachers also struggled with emotional control. They claimed that when teaching English classes, their emotions, such as boredom, spiritlessness, laziness, and anger, were frequently uncontrollable.

The teachers acknowledged that their spiritlessness and boredom were caused by the school's environment, which remained the same every day. While boredom is regarded as a depressing emotion (deactivating in terms of activation), it has a negative emotional valence Dumančić (2018). They encountered the same people there, including students, other teachers, the school's cleaning staff, and security personnel. Teachers spend each day in the same location, which is unique to the school setting and is therefore always visible. The second feeling, laziness, despite having the capacity to act or exert oneself, being lazy is a disposition against activity or effort which appeared when the teaching process that the teachers, in this case, mentioned occasionally occurred because of several issues that students brought about, which undoubtedly had a significant impact on their attitudes and motivation. Examples of these issues include overactive students, students who were constantly noisy in class, students who refused to complete their assignments, and disobedient students, all of which occurred continuously and repeatedly in class. The last emotion experienced by teachers was anger. Anger is a negative emotion brought on by an unfair or cruel incident that has occurred. This incident was not particularly serious; rather, the teachers were merely irritated with the students for failing to grasp the straightforward lesson they had taught. It is only natural for a teacher to experience this if it repeatedly occurs and many things happened in their class which did by students also made teachers got anger.

Performance of teaching English materials

The next issue is about teaching material this is kind of problem that teacher much commented even all of them graduated from English education program in the collage and having more than three years experiences in teaching English but this problem still could not be handled by them, there are variation external factors happened which mentioned by the teachers such as ever-changing curricula, irrelevant textbooks, and inadequate school facilities, of course these problems can result in problems that are broken down as follows: here were the teachers mentioned their problems related about teaching materials such as grammar, writing, listening and speaking that they could not handle during teaching process namely: lack of understanding of material, Sometimes not preparing material, presenting material in a way that was not optimal, less creative in developing material, having difficulty explaining material, lack of strategy when delivering lessons, and teachers were looking for references from many sources.

Teacher's concern for student personality

Based on teachers' perspectives, I discovered in this research that students' behavior during the learning process was another significant issue. In this instance, the teacher said that they were aware of this particular issue within themselves. Teachers openly acknowledged that they were unable to give each student their undivided attention in a consistent manner. A few of the teacher confessions I was able to gather were could not pique students' interest, was unable to pay attention to each student individually, and was less skilled at handling students who were disinterested in completing their grammar assignments. Teachers were less assertive with students who frequently disrupted class, occasionally favoring only smart students, and being unaware of students' interests. According to teachers, classes typically had between thirty and thirty-five students, and a teacher might manage more than three classes per week, which equated to twelve hours of lessons per week that the teacher had to handle independently.

Teachers' discipline in teaching English

The final problem I found in this research involved teacher discipline. Teachers claimed that they were still unable to maintain discipline in their daily lessons. Teachers are to blame for this kind of issue because they rarely use English with their students when teaching speaking lessons, making it difficult for students to learn new words from them. Teachers are also less strict about punishing students who do not use the English language in class. Additionally, they claimed that their lack of preparation before class prevented them from paying attention during the lesson. Additionally, they did a poorer job of encouraging students to learn before or after class.

This case revealed that teacher emotional control is the thing that really important to handle teachers without controlling our emotions we as a teacher could not handle class maximally related to the study by Prior (2019) has explained that teacher professionalization, classroom practice, and teacher identities are all fundamentally influenced by emotions. This result shows the emotions that teachers cannot control the first is about spiritlessness and boredom. Dumančić (2018) explained in their study that in English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom there are six separate categories—subject matter, students, tasks and activities, student assessment, teaching aids and materials, and teaching methods—were used to group various sources of boredom. But I found unique and different kinds of causes of boredom that teachers felt boredom and spiritless because of the school environment which is always the same every day. The laziness emotion of teachers mentioned in this result was because they could not manage their students in the classroom while teaching process according to this finding I can conclude that that thing happened also because there are so many student behavior that they make repeatedly and continuously without stopping which in the end results in a lazy and unprofessional attitude from a teacher who deals with them happened. Teachers got angry in this next issue because of getting many things that happened in their classroom during the teaching process specifically which came from students, overactive students did not want to do their assignments, being noisy in the class, and so on, it is related to the study that has discussed by Burić and Frenzel (2019) The term "triggers of teacher anger" refers to interactions with students and includes things like breaking classroom rules, being rude and haughty, disrespecting the

teacher and peers, acting aggressively, and obstructing learning objectives with inappropriate behavior. Sweating, headaches, a rise in blood pressure, and an increase in heart rate were all described as physiological symptoms of teachers' experiences with anger.

Additionally, teacher performance is a major problem in ELT classrooms. According to this result, teachers confess to having a lack of understanding of the material, sometimes not preparing the material, ineffectively presenting the material, being less creative when developing the material, struggling to explain the material, lacking a strategy for teaching, and looking for references from a variety of sources. These themes were also mentioned by Rinantanti et al. (2019), who suggested that factors affecting teachers' performance, such as overcrowded classroom conditions, inadequate facilities and learning resources, curriculum and government policies that are out of step with students' needs, family background, and family support, as well as the student's cultural background, may contribute to the student's poor performance of English learning achievement in Papua.

According to this finding, teachers should be concerned about students' personalities. Many teachers admit that they don't pay enough attention to their students because of the large class size and heavy teaching load they bear. This is especially true of students who struggle to understand what they are learning, as demonstrated by Geng et al. (2019) explained the fundamental qualities of teachers, such as empathy, compassion, understanding, flexibility, tolerance, and love of children, as well as the competencies and skills required for classroom management, as well as whether the teaching profession suits them. In their study, McGrath and Van Bergen (2019) found that two groups relate to teachers' concern for their students: the first cluster included teachers' compassion/empathy, emotion control, perspective-taking, regret, and attachment behavior. The second cluster included concepts like tolerance of behavior, forgiveness, and behavior attributions.

According to the findings of this study, teacher discipline is a form of professional development. Teachers admitted that they sometimes lacked focus while teaching English classes and that they were not always firm in dealing with rowdy students in speaking classes. These barriers should be overcome by teachers' academic discipline because Mercader and Gairín (2020) stated that the academic discipline of university professors is one of the most important factors in ensuring that students behave in class.

Conclusion

In the context of ELT, teaching problems are significant problem because they have a significant impact on the ELT process and a very broad scope. After examining the participant teachers' questionnaires, this study only discusses problems with English teaching in a specific area. I can conclude that numerous issues with teaching English in the classroom involve both the teacher and outside factors that have a significant impact on teacher professional development in ELT classrooms. Teachers must be aware of their weaknesses as teachers to continue to improve their teaching abilities without feeling satisfied. The teaching-English problem is a problem that should not be undervalued because it has a significant impact on the effectiveness of learning English in elementary schools. To further our understanding of this type of problem, I would advise another researcher to focus their research on issues like teacher boredom, teacher behavior, and teacher

performance. Another idea might be how to address the issue as an English teacher in the classroom, in which case reading the study's findings would be fantastic.

References

- Ahmed, M. K. (2018). Pedagogy in speaking: Challenges addressed by teacher-student in the ESL context. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 7(3), 97-107. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.7n.3p.97>
- Akbari, Z. (2015). Current challenges in teaching/learning English for EFL learners: The case of junior high school and high school. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 199, 394-401. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.07.524>
- Ali, M., & Walker, A. L. (2014). Bogged down ELT in Bangladesh: Problems and policy. *English Today*, 30(2), 33-38. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0266078414000108>
- Binmahboob, T. (2020). YouTube as a learning tool to improve students' speaking skills as perceived by EFL teachers in secondary school. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 9(6), 13-22. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.9n.6p.13>
- Burić, I., & Frenzel, A. C. (2019). Teacher anger: New empirical insights using a multi-method approach. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 86, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2019.102895>
- Dumančić, D. (2018). Investigating boredom among EFL teachers. *ExELL*, 6(1), 57-80. <https://doi.org/10.2478/exell-2019-0006>
- Geng, J., Jong, M. S.-Y., & Chai, C. S. (2019). Hong Kong teachers' self-efficacy and concerns about STEM education. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 28(1), 35-45. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-018-0414-1>
- Gultom, E. (2015). English language teaching problems in Indonesia. *Proceeding: 7th International Seminar on Regional Education*, 3, 1234-1241.
- Hamad, M. M. (2017). Using WhatsApp to enhance students' learning of English language "Experience to share". *Higher Education Studies*, 7(4), 74-87. <https://doi.org/10.5539/hes.v7n4p74>
- Hidayati, K. H. (2018). Teaching writing to EFL learners: An investigation. *Langkawi*, 4(1), 21-31. <http://dx.doi.org/10.31332/lkw.v4i1.772>
- Islam, S., Hasan, K., Sultana, S., Karim, A., & Rahman, M. M. (2021). English language assessment in Bangladesh today: Principles, practices, and problems. *Lang Test Asia*, 11, 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40468-020-00116-z>
- Jon, R. B., Embong, R., Purnama, B., & Wadi, A. S. (2021). The challenges of English language teaching in Indonesia. *International Journal of English and Applied Linguistics (IJEAL)*, 1(3), 158-168. <https://doi.org/10.47709/ijeal.v1i3.1157>
- Malebese, L., & Tlali, M. F. (2019). Teaching of English first additional language in rural learning environments: A case for problem-based learning environments : a case for problem-based learning. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 0(0), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2018.1544300>

- Malik, H., Humaira, M. A., Komari, A. N., Fathurrochman, I., & Jayanto, I. (2021). Identification of barriers and challenges to teaching English at an early age in Indonesia: an international publication analysis study. *Linguistics and Culture Review*, 5(1), 217–229. <https://doi.org/10.21744/lingcure.v5n1.1485>
- McGrath, K. F., & Van Bergen, P. (2019). Attributions and emotional competence: why some teachers experience close relationships with disruptive students (and others don't). *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 25(3), 334–357. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2019.1569511>
- Mercader, C., & Gairín, J. (2020). University teachers' perception of barriers to the use of digital technologies: the importance of the academic discipline. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 17(1), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-020-0182-x>
- Songbatumis, A. M. (2017). Challenges in teaching English faced by English teachers at MTsN Taliwang, Indonesia. *Journal of Foreign Language Teaching and Learning*, 2(2), 54-67. <https://doi.org/10.18196/ftl.2223>
- Noom-ura, S. (2013). English-teaching problems in Thailand and Thai teachers' professional development needs. 6(11), 139–147. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n11p139>
- Pennington, M. C., & Richards, J. C. (2016). Teacher identity in language teaching: Integrating personal, contextual, and professional factors. *RELC Journal*, 47(1), 5–23. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688216631219>
- Prior, M. T. (2019). Elephants in the room: An “affective turn,” or just feeling our way? *Modern Language Journal*, 103(2), 516–527. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12573>
- Rahman, M. M., Islam, M. S., Karim, A., Chowdhury, T. A., Rahman, M. M., Seraj, P. M. I., & Singh, M. K. M. (2019). English language teaching in Bangladesh today: Issues, outcomes and implications. *Language Testing in Asia*, 9, 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40468-019-0085-8>
- Rinantanti, Y., Bin-Tahir, S. Z., & Aminah. (2019). The impact of EFL senior high school teachers' performance in Papua, Indonesia toward the students' English learning achievement. *Asian EFL Journal*, 23(3), 431–447.
- Sarihuddin, S. (2013). The implementation of the 2013 curriculum and the issues of English language teaching and learning in Indonesia. *The Asian Conference on Language Teaching 2013*, 567–574.
- Utami, R. P., & Astuti, U. P. (2021). EFL teachers' problems and solutions in teaching English to students with intellectual and developmental disability. *IJELTAL Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 6(20), 173–188.
- Yulia, Y. (2013). Teaching challenges in Indonesia: Motivating students and teachers' classroom language. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 3(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v3i1.186>