

INTERACTIVE STRATEGIES IN EFL CLASSROOMS: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW ON COMMUNICATIVE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Communication competence in English is a key skill that is increasingly important in the era of globalization, especially for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. This literature review aims to examine the effectiveness of interactive learning methods in improving EFL students' communication skills, with reference to sociocultural and interactionist theories. The research used a systematic review design of empirical studies published between 2013 and 2023. A thematic analysis of the selected literature revealed that interactive strategies such as role-playing, task-based learning, and utilization of digital platforms such as Quizizz consistently improved students' fluency, participation, and confidence in English. These approaches encourage meaningful interactions and active student engagement, which are crucial factors in language acquisition. However, challenges such as technological limitations and lack of teacher training remain barriers to implementation. This study emphasizes the importance of institutional support to optimize the pedagogical benefits of interactive approaches in EFL classrooms. The findings provide practical insights for educators in designing communication-focused learning in various educational contexts.

Keywords: interactive teaching, communicative skills, EFL, digital tools, classroom strategy.

Abstrak

Kompetensi komunikasi dalam bahasa Inggris merupakan keterampilan utama yang semakin penting di era globalisasi, terutama bagi pembelajar Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL). Tinjauan literatur ini bertujuan untuk menguji efektivitas metode pembelajaran

interaktif dalam meningkatkan kemampuan komunikasi siswa EFL, dengan mengacu pada teori sosiokultural dan interaksionis. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain tinjauan sistematis terhadap studi empiris yang diterbitkan antara tahun 2013 dan 2023. Analisis tematik dari literatur yang dipilih mengungkapkan bahwa strategi interaktif seperti bermain peran, pembelajaran berbasis tugas, dan pemanfaatan platform digital seperti Quizizz secara konsisten meningkatkan kefasihan, partisipasi, dan kepercayaan diri siswa dalam bahasa Inggris. Pendekatan-pendekatan ini mendorong interaksi yang bermakna dan keterlibatan siswa secara aktif, yang merupakan faktor penting dalam pemerolehan bahasa. Namun, tantangan seperti keterbatasan teknologi dan kurangnya pelatihan guru masih menjadi hambatan dalam penerapannya. Studi ini menekankan pentingnya dukungan institusional untuk mengoptimalkan manfaat pedagogis dari pendekatan interaktif di kelas EFL. Temuan ini memberikan wawasan praktis bagi para pendidik dalam merancang pembelajaran yang berfokus pada komunikasi dalam berbagai konteks pendidikan.

Kata-kata kunci: pengajaran interaktif, kemampuan berkomunikasi, efl, alat-alat digital, strategi kelas.

INTRODUCTION

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, the development of communicative competence has emerged as a central objective in modern language pedagogy [1]. While traditional teacher-centered approaches that focus on grammar drills and rote memorization remain prevalent, these methods are frequently criticized for their limited ability to foster real-life communication skills among learners [2]. In response, interactive learning strategies such as role-playing, group discussions, task-based learning, and information gap activities have gained traction due to their emphasis on learner engagement, authentic language use, and meaningful interaction [3]. These approaches create opportunities for students to use English in realistic and purposeful ways, thereby strengthening both their linguistic and pragmatic competence [4], [5].

Despite widespread curricular reforms embracing communicative approaches, implementation at the classroom level particularly in Asian countries like Indonesia remains uneven. Constraints such as overcrowded classrooms, exam-oriented education systems, and insufficient teacher training continue to hinder the development of students' communicative abilities [6], [7]. Consequently, many Indonesian EFL learners-complete

years of study without gaining the confidence or skills to use English effectively in real communicative settings.

Although numerous empirical studies have examined the application of interactive learning strategies, there is a lack of comprehensive literature reviews that synthesize findings related specifically to their impact on communicative competence in diverse EFL contexts. Therefore, this literature review aims to answer the research question:

"How effective are interactive learning strategies in improving the communicative skills of EFL learners, based on empirical studies published over the last decade?"

By analyzing recent scholarly literature, this review seeks to identify key themes, highlight consistent findings, and uncover research gaps. Ultimately, the goal is to offer practical insights for educators and contribute to the advancement of communicative language teaching practices in Indonesia and other similar EFL contexts.

Communicating in class using good and correct language is a crucial skill for students to support the learning process. Good language means conveying messages clearly, politely, and in accordance with accepted grammar. Correct language, on the other hand, demonstrates the use of Indonesian language rules, including spelling rules, sentence structure, and appropriate vocabulary choice [17], [18].

In classroom interactions, students are required to express their opinions, ask questions, and answer teacher questions using language that is non-offensive, easy to understand, and appropriate to the learning context. Good communication also reflects respect for teachers and classmates, thus creating a conducive learning environment [19]-[21].

Furthermore, good and correct language skills will train students to think logically, systematically, and critically. For example, during group discussions, students must convey their ideas coherently and listen attentively to the opinions of others. This will foster social skills and instill the value of language discipline [22]-[24].

METHOD RESEARCH

This study employed a qualitative research design in the form of a systematic literature review to examine the effectiveness of interactive teaching methods in enhancing EFL learners' communicative skills. The study used a descriptive qualitative approach through the analysis of relevant literature. The population consisted of scholarly articles and journals discussing interactive teaching methods in EFL contexts. Samples were selected purposively from publications between 2013 and 2023 that met the criteria: written in English, focused on EFL/ESL, applied interactive methods, and addressed communicative skills. Data were collected through document analysis, using a data extraction table to record key information from each study. The data were analysed using content analysis and thematic coding to identify patterns, themes, and key findings across the studies. The study was guided by the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) framework, which emphasizes interaction as the core of language learning.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

A number of recent empirical investigations conducted within the last five years have consistently demonstrated that the application of interactive learning strategies exerts a significant influence on the improvement of students' communication abilities, particularly in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. For example, [8], [16] conducted a study that examined the use of interactive lecture methods among elementary school students in Asahan Regency and found substantial gains in their English language proficiency. The findings suggest that such approaches, which actively engage students in the learning process, help them internalize language skills more effectively.

Similarly, [9] explored the implementation of the Quizizz digital platform as a means of interactive learning in an Islamic senior high school. Their research highlighted an increase in students' grammatical understanding and overall engagement with the learning material when exposed to gamified, participatory exercises. This points to the importance of incorporating technological tools that encourage active learner participation.

In addition, [10], [15] identified a positive relationship between interactive learning techniques and students' motivation to practice English speaking. This study, carried out

at STKIP Al Maksum Langkat, revealed that student-centered methods boosted learners' enthusiasm and willingness to engage in spoken English activities, thereby contributing to improved communication performance. These converging findings emphasize that modern, interactive educational techniques are instrumental in enhancing EFL learners' communicative competencies across diverse learning environments.

Discussion

a. Active Participation and Learner Engagement

The reviewed studies affirm that strategies encouraging active student involvement—such as discussions, group tasks, and role plays—are vital for improving communicative competence. This is in line with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which asserts that social interaction in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) enhances learning. For instance, the ETH method used by [11] and the storytelling strategy by [12], [14] provided collaborative platforms for learners to co-construct meaning and build fluency.

b. Digital Technology and Gamification

The integration of digital platforms like Quizizz reflects Long's Interaction Hypothesis, as these tools offer opportunities for meaningful communication and immediate feedback. Gamified elements also reduce anxiety and make learning more appealing. However, such tools assume the presence of reliable internet and digital literacy, which may not be evenly distributed across educational contexts.

c. Improved Fluency and Confidence

A consistent theme across studies is the improvement in learners' fluency and self-confidence. Students demonstrated greater willingness to speak in front of peers, use varied vocabulary, and sustain conversations. This was particularly evident in the research by [10], [13], where students transitioned from passive listeners to active communicators.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the integration of interactive learning strategies clearly enhances the communication skills of students in English as a Foreign-Language (EFL) contexts. By

promoting active participation, authentic interaction, and meaningful language use, these methods help learners become more confident and fluent in using English. However, the successful implementation of these strategies requires systemic support. Schools must invest in teacher training, provide adequate digital tools, and align curricula with communicative language teaching (CLT) principles. With proper support, interactive learning can become a transformative approach that equips learners with the communicative competence needed in today's globalized world.

Theoretical Implications

This review highlights the relevance of integrating sociocultural theory and interactionist perspectives in EFL pedagogy. The emphasis on social interaction, scaffolding, and negotiation of meaning supports a shift from passive learning to dynamic, student-centered instruction.

Practical Implications

Educators and policymakers should:

1. Provide regular teacher training on interactive and communicative teaching strategies.
2. Develop interactive digital media and ensure equitable access in all schools.
3. Design syllabi that reflect CLT principles, emphasizing communication over rote memorization.

By addressing these practical needs, schools can foster more engaging and effective English language learning environments.

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