

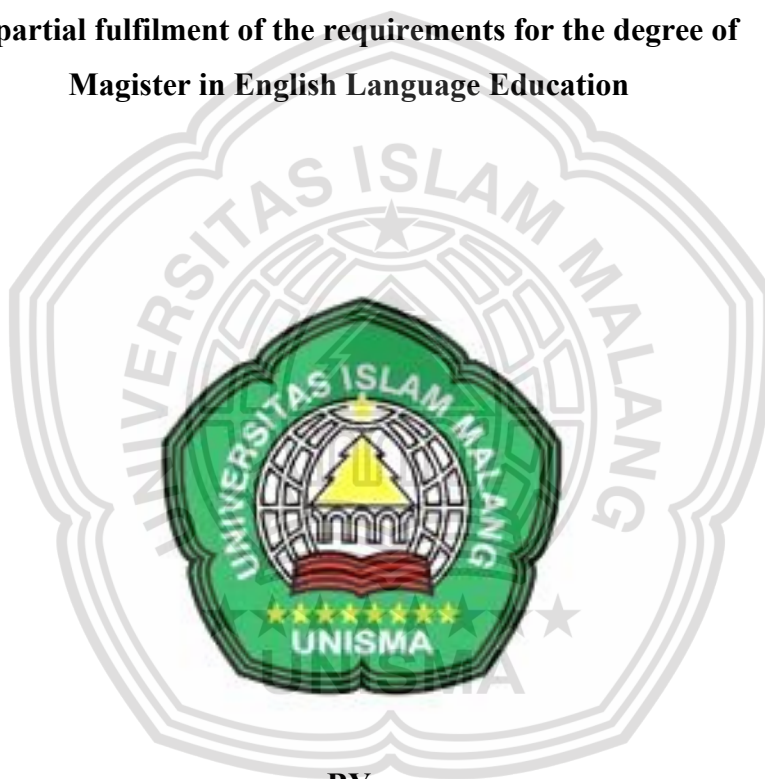
**AN INVESTIGATION OF CLASSROOM INTERACTIONS IN
ENGLISH CLASS: TEACHER'S AND STUDENTS'
PERSPECTIVES**

THESIS

Presented to

Universitas Islam Malang

**in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Magister in English Language Education**



BY

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**UNIVERSITAS ISLAM MALANG
POSTGRADUATE PROGRAM
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT**

2025

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ABSTRACT

Huda, Bahrul, 2025. An Investigation of Classroom Interactions in English Class: Teacher's and Students' Perspectives. Thesis, English Language Education Study Program, Postgraduate Program, University of Islam Malang, advisors: (1) Sonny Elfiyanto. S.S., S.Pd., M.Pd., Ph.D (2) Dr. H. Alfian Zuhairi, M.Pd.

Key Words: Classroom Interactions, English class, teacher's and students' perspectives.

Effective teacher-student interaction is important in fostering English as a second language, especially in adolescents. However, achieving proficiency remains challenging in Indonesia due to linguistic, cultural, and educational factors. Therefore, the teacher needs to employ appropriate strategies to overcome these problems based on the situation of the class. Based on the explanation above, the study investigates two research objectives: to identify the challenges in fostering effective teacher-learner interactions in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom and to examine the strategies employed by the teacher in various teaching-learning situations.

This study was conducted at SMPN 1 Binangun Blitar, especially in the eighth-grade A class. It consisted of thirty-two students. The researcher employed a combination of semi-structured interviews, observation, and document analysis. The interview focused on an English teacher and three representative students to provide deep insight into their perspectives. Classroom observation was chosen to assess teacher-learner interaction in the EFL classroom, and document analysis was used to examine teaching material. As the result, the researcher found that the teacher employed five varieties of strategies to overcome the challenge of teacher-learner interaction in the EFL classroom: 1) adapting to diverse learning styles, 2). use of interactive activities and group work, 3). encouraging peer interaction, 4). clear interaction and feedback, and 5). incorporating technology. These strategies were applied to address the three main challenges identified: 1). student engagement, 2). Language proficiency, and 3) Resource limitation. By applying these strategies, the teacher could create an inclusive and dynamic classroom environment.

As conclusion, Effective teacher-learner interaction has to tailor teaching methods to meet the diverse needs of students, especially in mixed-ability classroom. Therefore, students could engage actively during the program.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, the problem of the study, the objectives of the study, the assumption of the study, the significance of the study, scope and delimitation, and the definition of key terms.

1.1. Background of the Study

English has become a global lingua franca, enabling communication across different cultures and countries (He & Li, 2023; Ubaidillah & Widiati, 2021). Mastering English offers numerous advantages in education and the professional world, such as improved employability, enhanced communication skills, and access to global knowledge (Dunakhir & Osman, 2023; Islama et al., 2022). Additionally, proficiency in English opens up access to a wealth of resources, literature, and media, broadening students' cultural and intellectual horizons (Alhadad et al., 2021). However, achieving proficiency in English remains challenging in Indonesia due to a combination of linguistic, cultural, and educational factors. Traditional English teaching methods in Indonesia often focus heavily on grammar and translation, limiting students' ability to use the language in real-world contexts and hindering their development of communicative competence (Deng, 2023; Hu, 2024). Cultural influences, such as teachers' norms and values, also affect the effectiveness of teaching strategies and students' engagement with the language (Heriyawati et al., 2014; Ubaidillah et al., 2023).

Furthermore, educational policies emphasizing high-stakes testing and rigid curricula can create a disconnect between what is taught in the classroom and students' actual language needs in daily life (Parker et al., 2022; Shaturaev, 2021). These factors contribute to the challenges in English language proficiency in Indonesia.

Effective Second Language Acquisition (SLA) strategies are crucial to address these challenges. These strategies, which incorporate cognitive, metacognitive, and sociocultural aspects, can help improve language learning outcomes (Ye, 2024; Żammit, 2021). One of the most significant components of SLA is teacher-learner interaction, which plays a significant role in facilitating language learning. Both verbal and non-verbal communication between teachers and students helps create an environment that fosters information exchange, feedback, and emotional connections, all of which are critical for enhancing language acquisition (Daraghmi & Asali-Van Der Wal, 2023; Năznea, 2022). Research has shown that these interactions promote active student engagement and deeper cognitive processing, which are essential for successful language learning (Aslan, 2021; Fathi et al., 2024). Sonny and Fukazawa (2020) also emphasizes that interactions that encourage active participation significantly increase motivation and language retention, especially in adolescent learners who face unique developmental challenges in language acquisition.

While a foreign language has been researched, the specific dynamics of teacher-learner interactions, especially in the non-Western educational context of Indonesia, remain relatively underexplored. Most of the available literature

concentrates on adult learners or upper-level education, leaving a significant gap in the issues of fostering meaningful interaction in secondary school EFL classrooms, especially in the context of adolescents. Their developmental stage, coupled with distinct emotional needs, diverse linguistic backgrounds, and varying levels of motivation, makes the language learning process very challenging for adolescents. The absence of detailed studies on teacher-learner interaction in Indonesian junior high school classroom is the gap this phenomenon intends to fill.

This study is novel in its exploration of how teacher-learner interactions can be optimized in the context of an Indonesian junior high school, particularly with eight-grade students at SMPN 1 Binangun Blitar. While previous research has highlighted the importance of teacher-student interactions (Li & Zhang, 2023; Schwartz et al., 2023), few studies have focused on the practical strategies used by teachers in secondary schools to overcome the challenges of diverse proficiency levels and motivational differences among students. The study also builds upon findings from the Kandidat Magister Mengabdi (KMM) program, where it was observed that innovative teaching methods such as ice-breaking activities were often ineffective without being adapted to students' learning preferences (Zuhairi & Umamah, 2016). This gap in effective engagement further emphasized the need for more differentiated and adaptive teaching strategies tailored to the diverse needs of students.

Furthermore, research on integrating corpus linguistics into SLA highlights the value of inductive learning, where students uncover language

patterns and grammatical rules through engagement with authentic linguistic data. This method fosters deeper cognitive involvement and enhances the practicality of language instruction (Heriyawati & Elfiyanto, 2023; Schwartz et al., 2023). However, the effectiveness of such strategies can be influenced by variations in students' language proficiency and motivational levels. As noted by Naibaho (2022), factors such as prior language experience, learner goals, and the perceived relevance of the target language significantly impact how students respond to instructional methods. These disparities suggest the necessity for instructional strategies sensitive to learners' linguistic backgrounds and motivational profiles, ensuring the learners are adequately supported in the classroom.

In 2024, a month-long observation was conducted at SMPN 1 Binangun Blitar as part of the Candidate Magister Mengabdi (KMM) program. In this academic community service initiative, postgraduate student candidates engage directly with schools to identify and address educational challenges. During this period, several critical issues regarding teacher-learner interactions were observed. Despite teachers' efforts to foster student engagement, persistent challenges remained, primarily due to oversized classes, students' varied levels of language proficiency, and the limited use of instructional strategies tailored to individual learner needs. Although innovative methods such as ice-breaking activities were implemented, these often failed to align with students' diverse learning preferences, resulting in inconsistent levels of participation. One significant finding from the 2024 Candidate Magister Mengabdi (KMM) study was that while ice-breaking activities could potentially boost student motivation,

their effectiveness was significantly reduced when not matched to students' preferred learning styles. This engagement gap emphasized the necessity for more differentiated and adaptive teaching strategies, particularly in classrooms where learners display a wide range of proficiency and motivation. Building upon the findings of the KMM program, this study seeks to explore how improving and strategically planning teacher-learner interactions can contribute to a more inclusive, engaging, and effective learning environment. Zuhairi and Mistar, (2023) also suggest that a focus on understanding students' individual learning styles and emotional states can help educators tailor their interactions and instructional methods, increasing the likelihood of successful language acquisition.

1.2. Research Problem of the Study

In this study, the researcher attempts to investigate the following problems:

1. What are the challenges in fostering effective teacher-learner interactions in the EFL class of SMPN 1 Binangun Blitar?
2. How does the teacher apply specific strategies to foster interaction in each situation during teaching-learning in the EFL class of SMPN 1 Binangun Blitar?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

In line with the research problems stated above, the study's objectives are as follows:

1. To identify the challenges in fostering effective teacher-learner interactions in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom at SMPN 1 Binangun Blitar.
2. To examine the strategies employed by teacher to foster teacher-learner interaction in various teaching-learning situations within the EFL classroom at SMPN 1 Binangun Blitar.

The study aims to provide valuable insights into teacher-learner interactions in an Indonesian junior high school context through these objectives. By understanding these interactions' challenges, strategies, and impacts, the study seeks to contribute to developing more effective and culturally relevant teaching practices in the EFL classroom. Ultimately, the findings will help optimize classroom communication and foster an engaging and effective learning environment that supports the language acquisition of students with diverse learning needs and backgrounds.

1.4. Assumptions of the Study ★★★★★

This study operates under several key assumptions regarding teacher-learner interactions in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom at SMPN 1 Binangun Blitar, which align with the research questions guiding the investigation.

First, it is assumed that various challenges may hinder effective teacher-learner interactions in the EFL classroom. These challenges could stem from factors such as varying student language proficiency, classroom dynamics, and

institutional constraints. The research question concerning the challenges in fostering effective teacher-learner interactions seeks to explore how these factors influence communication and engagement between teacher and students.

Secondly, it is assumed that teacher apply specific pedagogical strategies to foster interaction in diverse teaching-learning situations. These strategies may include questioning techniques, scaffolding, group discussions, corrective feedback, and multimodal teaching approaches to promote student participation and enhance comprehension. The study will investigate the types of strategies teachers use in response to the varying needs and circumstances in the classroom, as indicated in the research question regarding the strategies teachers employ.

1.5. Significance of Study

This study holds significant value for students, teachers, and future researchers, especially in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. By addressing research questions on the challenges, strategies, and impact of teacher-learner interactions, the findings offer valuable insight that can benefit various stakeholders in the educational process.

For students, the research aims to provide a deeper understanding of how teacher-learner interactions influence their language acquisition process. By recognizing the role of effective communication in the classroom, students can become more engaged in their learning. The study's findings can help them develop better communication skills, increase motivation, and improve their overall proficiency in English. Moreover, by identifying challenges within

classroom interactions, this study can contribute to creating more student-centred learning environments that promote active participation and support linguistic development, addressing the varied needs of learners as outlined in the background of the study.

For teachers, this study offers valuable insights into the strategies that enhance teacher-learner interaction in the EFL classroom. By exploring the different approaches employed by the teacher, the study will provide practical recommendations on how to foster meaningful communication and engagement in the classroom. Teachers will better understand how to adapt their teaching methods to meet the diverse needs of students, as indicated in the research question related to the strategies used to foster interaction. The findings can help educators refine their pedagogical techniques, create more interactive learning environments, and improve their effectiveness in supporting second language acquisition.

For future researchers, this study lays a foundation for further exploration into teacher-learner interactions and second language acquisition. The insight generated from this study can inform future research on innovative teaching methods, classroom discourse analysis, and the broader implication of interaction in language learning. Additionally, this research contributes to the growing body of literature on EFL education and provides empirical evidence that may guide future studies, inform policy development, and shape best practices in language instruction. By addressing gaps in the current research, particularly in the context of adolescent learners and non-western educational settings, this study paves the

way for further investigation into how teacher-student interactions impact language acquisition.

1.6. Scope and Delimitation

This study focuses specifically on teacher-learner interactions within an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom at SMPN 1 Binangun Blitar, with a particular emphasis on the eighth-grade 8A class. The core objective of the research is to explore the challenges and strategies related to teacher-student communication, particularly among eighth-grade students. By examining these interactions, the study seeks to understand how various teacher-learner strategies influence student engagement, motivation, and language proficiency.

The scope of the research is delimited as follows:

- a) Context: The study is conducted in a single EFL classroom at SMPN 1 Binangun Blitar, focusing on the eighth-grade 8A class. This class was selected due to its diverse student profile, which includes varying levels of English language proficiency and engagement. The research is confined to this classroom context, and the findings are specific to this particular setting. The study does not aim to generalize the results to other grade levels or schools, though it provides valuable insights into the teacher-learner dynamic at play in this unique environment.
- b) Participants: This study involves the teacher and students from the 8A EFL classroom. The teacher was selected based on several key qualities, including at least seven years of experience teaching English as a second language at

the junior high level, a professional teaching certification, and the ability to adapt teaching strategies to meet the diverse needs of students. This ensures that the teacher has the experience and skills necessary to navigate the varied learning styles and proficiency levels in the classroom.

Three students were chosen to represent different learning styles: one auditory learner (male), one visual learner (female), and one kinesthetic learner (male). These students were selected because they actively participate in class and show different levels of English proficiency. Their perspectives provide valuable insights into how various strategies affect their engagement, motivation, and learning.

Instead of addressing each challenge and strategy separately, this study explores how these challenges naturally arise in the classroom and how teacher uses different strategies to address them. By focusing on real-time classroom experiences, the study dives deep into how strategies are implemented and how both the teacher and students experience the learning process. This approach provide a fuller, more authentic picture of how teacher-learner interactions shape the classroom environment and influence student learning.

1.7. Definition of Key Terms

To ensure clarity and consistency in this study, some definitions are put forward:

Teacher-learner interaction is the teacher and learners' mutual communication in class. Through this interaction, effective learning can be achieved since it encompasses verbal communication, such as flows of questions, explanation, and feedback, as well as non-verbal communications such as body movements and facial expressions. Interaction within learning environments greatly impacts cognitive development, which is the focus of Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978).

Classroom challenges are obstacles or difficulties faced by both the teacher and students that can hinder effective teaching and learning (Hopfenbeck et al., 2023). Challenges may include diverse language proficiency levels, varying learning styles, classroom size, and cultural factors that impact teacher-learner communication.

Teaching strategies refer to the methods and approaches used by the teacher to facilitate learning (Rasyid et al., 2023). Teaching strategies that enhance student participation and learning outcomes in an EFL classroom include techniques such as questioning, scaffolding, group discussion, feedback, and differentiated instruction in the context of this study.

Students' engagement is the level of active participation, motivation, and interest students show during lessons (Johar et al., 2023). High levels of engagement are associated with better academic outcomes and increased motivation. In the context of EFL, engagement is critical for language development, as it encourages active participation in classroom activities, such as discussions and role-plays, that facilitate language use in real-life contexts.

Language proficiency levels are the varying degrees of ability students have in understanding and using the English language (Bagheri Nevisi & Farhani, 2022). Language proficiency can range from beginner to advanced, impacting how students interact with the teacher and respond to classroom activities.



CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This chapter presents the research's conclusion and suggestions. The first point is the conclusion, and the second is a suggestion.

6.1. Conclusion

Effective teacher-learner interactions in the classroom significantly affected by several challenges, such as student engagement issues, language proficiency disparities, and resource limitations. Engagement was particularly challenging for students with passive learning styles or those who struggled with language proficiency, making it difficult for them to fully participate in class activities. Language proficiency disparities further complicate effective teacher-learner interaction, with students with lower proficiency finding it difficult to contribute to group discussions or role-play activities. In addition, the lack of consistent access to technology and resources such as projectors hindered the full implementation of interactive digital tools, which could have enhanced student engagement and language practice. These challenges are consistent with the findings of differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 2001), which emphasizes the need to tailor teaching methods to meet the diverse needs of students, especially in mixed-ability classrooms.

Despite these challenges, the teacher's use of five teaching strategies to overcome them: adapting to diverse learning styles, use of interactive activities and group work, encouraging peer interaction, clear interaction and feedback, and

the last incorporating technology in building effective teacher learner interaction in EFL classroom.

6.2 Suggestion

Based on the findings and discussion, several suggestions are proposed for teachers, school administrations, and future researchers to improve the effectiveness of teacher-learner interactions and support second language acquisition.

6.2.1 For Teachers

Teachers should continue to employ differentiated instruction by adapting their teaching strategies to cater to students' diverse learning styles. Teachers can use a combination of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic methods to ensure that all students remain engaged and actively participate in the learning process. This approach aligns with the understanding that students have unique learning preferences, and by providing multiple avenues for engagement, teachers can foster a more inclusive environment that supports each learner's needs. Tailoring instruction to meet these diverse preferences not only helps keep students engaged but also maximizes their opportunities for effective language acquisition.

In addition to adapting teaching methods, teachers should implement more interactive activities such as role-playing, peer feedback, and small group discussion to increase student engagement. These activities provide students with opportunities to engage meaningfully with the language in a supportive setting, which is particularly beneficial for students who may feel hesitant to speak in front of the entire class. Students build confidence in their communication skills by participating in group tasks or role-playing exercises and become more

comfortable using English in real-world contexts. These activities help enhance interaction and ensure that every student has the chance to practice speaking, listening, and collaborating, all of which are key components of language development.

Providing consistent feedback is also crucial for language development. Immediate and constructive feedback helps students understand what they did well and where they can improve. Teachers should continue offering positive reinforcement while providing specific guidance for self-correction and language reinforcement. Feedback should be timely, allowing students to make adjustment in real-time, which is essential for language growth. Furthermore, incorporating peer feedback into group activities fosters a supportive learning community where students learn from each other. This is not only enhances their understanding but also encourages collaborative learning and motivates students to actively participate in both the feedback process and the language-learning experience.

6.2.2 For School Administrators

School administrators should prioritize the allocation of teaching resources, particularly technology, to ensure that teachers have the tools they need to create engaging and interactive lessons. Access to projectors, Wi-fi, and other digital resources is crucial for integrating digital tools such Kahoot! and other interactive applications into the classroom. These resources significantly enhance the teacher's ability to foster student engagement and promote active language practice. By ensuring these tools are available in every classroom, administrators can help teachers create dynamic learning environments that cater to diverse students' needs and enhance language acquisition.

In addition to resource allocation, ongoing professional development is essential for equipping teachers with the necessary skills to effectively implement interactive teaching methods and differentiated instruction. School administrators should invest in regular training programs focusing on technology integration, interactive teaching strategies, and classroom management. This professional development will support teachers in creating interactive and engaging language learning environments that cater to various learning styles and enhance second language acquisition. By providing teachers with the training and resources they need, administrators can foster an atmosphere of continuous improvement that benefits both educators and students.

6.2.3 For Future Researchers

Future studies could further explore technology integration in the EFL classroom, specifically examining the impact of digital tools such Kahoot! or AI (artificial intelligence) tools-based feedback systems on student engagement and second language acquisition. Understanding how these tools influence student motivation, interaction, and language development could provide valuable insights into improving teaching practices in EFL settings. By examining the effectiveness of various digital applications, researchers could offer concrete recommendations for teachers to integrate technology into their lessons better, thereby enhancing student participation and promoting active learning in the language classroom.

Additionally, investigating resource-related challenges in Indonesian classrooms would be crucial for understanding how resource limitations impact the effectiveness of interactive teaching methods. Research could focus on identifying practical solutions to overcome barriers such as limited access to

technology, large class sizes, and inadequate materials. Gaining a deeper understanding of how resource scarcity affects teaching strategies and student learning engagement will help develop strategies that are both effective and practical in resource-constrained environments. Ensuring that teaching remains dynamic and inclusive despite limitations.



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