

Students' Voice on Their English Teacher's Teaching Techniques: A Case Study at A Private Indonesian Junior High School

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Abstract

This study is aimed to know the students' perception toward the English teacher's teaching techniques. This study was conducted in grade eight of two EFL classes of a junior high school in Indonesia. The instruments to collect the data was a Likert-scale questionnaire with five options of strongly agree to strongly disagree, while to analyze the data the researcher used descriptive statistics by finding means, standard deviation and frequency. An in-depth interview was also conducted to nine out of 60 students to scrutinize the students' voice on their English teachers' performance. The result of the analysis showed that the teacher in this study performed all the three techniques, controlled, semi-controlled and free technique. The finding also showed that the most frequently used technique was controlled technique, followed by semi-controlled and free technique. Meanwhile most of the students have positive perception toward their English teacher's teaching techniques.

Keywords: students' perception, controlled technique, semi-controlled technique, free technique

How to Cite: Pratolo, B. W., Susanti, A., Indriani. (2018). Students' Voice on Their English Teacher's Teaching Techniques: A Case Study at A Private Indonesian Junior High School. *English Language Teaching Educational Journal*, 1(1), 29-37.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is not only one way to transfer knowledge to learners, but it also a way to understand what they need, experience and feel and provide a necessary intervention to make them learn. When teachers teach a lesson to their students, they must use the ways to make interaction between them enjoyable. In the context of English language teaching and learning, English teachers need to make sure that the teaching techniques they use fit with their students learning need. Therefore, English teachers need to be creative in choosing their teaching techniques to assist, encourage and motivate the students as they are aware that not all the students have interest in English language. According to Effendi (2005) teaching means not only to show your acquaintance with English knowledge, but also your talent, experience and handiness of approaching your students to make the class enjoyable, relaxing, and interesting to them, so that, they will grasp the lesson excitedly and interactively.

As a foreign language, English is not an easy subject to learn by most Indonesian students. Most of them consider English as a complicated language

as the syntaxes, structures and the linguistic features are different. That is why although Indonesian students have learned English since junior high schools, some even started earlier (since elementary school), they still cannot use English as a means of communication. That is why basic error-usages of language are regularly found in communication among the Indonesian students. Some of them may understand English text, especially those who study at a university but when the text is long and complex, they give up. Their failure in reading comprehension test of TOEFL indicates their low English proficiency. In short, English language teaching in Indonesia cannot be considered a success (Mukhaiyar, 1994, Pratolo, 2015).

To help students build their interest in English language, English teachers need to find teaching techniques which fit with the students' learning needs. Students will enjoy learning activities if their teachers are creative, active, and use interesting techniques in teaching. Harmer (2007) stated that a good teacher is somebody who has an affinity with the students that he or she is teaching. It means that successful teachers are those people who can identify with the hopes, aspirations, and difficulties of their students while they are teaching them. Good teachers care more about their students' learning that they do about their own teaching (Brown, 2001). So, teachers should know more about their students, characteristics of their students, students' background life, culture, and what methods are suitable to teach foreign language in their teaching process. A good teacher always wants that his teaching should be effective. He wants that all the students of the class should properly attend, listen to him and try to grasp what he teaches in the class (Elizabeth, 2004). In short, a language teacher needs to choose the most appropriate teaching technique which meets students' learning needs to present language materials.

According to Anthony (1963) a technique is a strategy, contrivance or a trick that a teacher implements in the classroom to achieve the teaching goal. In short, he believes that a teaching technique is the way how a teacher performs in the classroom to meet the goal. Meanwhile Doff (1988) argues that there is a correlation between teaching technique with how learning activities are organized. Therefore, a teacher can change his technique if he believes that the new technique is more effective especially for the students. Furthermore, Brown (1995) asserts that teaching technique for a language teacher is the chosen way how the teacher presents language materials to learners and therefore it should match the students' learning needs.

This study was focused on looking at the teachers' performance based on Brown's taxonomy of language teaching techniques (2001). Brown classified technique into controlled, semi-controlled and free technique as he asserts that teaching technique always moves from manipulative to a free communication dimension. Controlled technique is the technique that is still under the supervision of a teacher and he can predict and direct what the students will do. Such activities as drilling, dictation, reading aloud belong to this classification. In a classroom communication where students have an opportunity to express their ideas in response to teachers' questions, teachers have less control towards what the students will say. They can say something that even different from

what the teachers expect. In this setting the students may communicate in a freer and spontaneous way. Therefore such activities like brainstorming, information gap, story-telling belong to the less-controlled activities. Meanwhile, free activities deal with the situation where students may act out activities or express ideas without the control from their teachers such as, role play, drama, discussion, problem solving, simulation etc. (Crookes & Chaudron, 1991). Table 1 below presents the characteristics of the three different techniques.

Table 1. Types of language teaching techniques (Crookes & Chaudron, 1991).

Controlled	Semi-controlled	Free
Teacher-centered Manipulative Structured Predicted student response Pre-planned objectives Set curriculum	Use of language in a less restrictive way than the controlled but taking into account linguistic patterns already set up by the teacher.	Student-centered Communicative Open-ended Unpredicted student response Negotiated objectives Cooperative curriculum

Perception, psychologically, is explained as a process where someone becomes aware toward everything which exists in her or his surroundings by means of the senses (Kartono & Gulo, 2003). Thus, the process of creating perception involves human being's senses because perception is the interpretation of what are caught by the senses. Meanwhile, according to Rookes (2000), perception is a process which involves the recognition and interpretation of stimuli which register on our sense. In other words, perception is related to how we make sense of our environment and sensation refers to basic stimulation of the sense organs.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was intended to investigate the teaching techniques used by the English teachers based on their students perceptions and how the students perceive their teachers' teaching techniques. To get the answer for the first objectives, a questionnaire of what the teachers did in the classroom was utilized. Meanwhile, an in-depths semi structured interview was conducted to get the answer for the second objective. The subjects of the research were the eighth grade students Laskar Pelangi Junior High School, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The number of the samples were 60 students distributed into two different classes, VIII A and VIII D. Eight students out of 60 were purposively selected to be invited for an in-depth interview. This number is ideal for an interview as Dornyei (2007) suggested. According to him the ideal number for an interview is between 6 to 10.

To know the level of students' perception, the writer used categorization which was made by referring to the normal distribution with the use of an ideal mean and an ideal standard deviation. The conversion criterion for deciding on

the standard of the ideal mean and the ideal standard deviation of English students' perception toward the English teacher's teaching techniques was presented in the following table:

Table 2. Conversion criterion

No.	Scale Number	Category
1.	Ideal mean + 1,5 (Ideal SD)	Strongly Agree
2.	Ideal mean + 0,5 (Ideal SD)	Agree
3.	Ideal mean - 0,5 (Ideal SD)	Rather Agree
4.	Ideal mean - 1,5 (Ideal SD)	Disagree
5.	< Ideal mean - 1,5 (Ideal SD)	Strongly Disagree

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Based on the score of the ideal mean and the ideal standard deviation, the following table presented the categorization which represented the standard of students' perception toward the English teacher's teaching techniques.

Table 3. Conversion criterion of students' perception toward the english teacher's teaching techniques

No.	Scale Number	Score Interval	Category
1.	Ideal mean + 1,5 (Ideal SD)	272.25 – 330	Strongly agree
2.	Ideal mean + 0,5 (Ideal SD)	222.75 – < 272.25	Agree
3.	Ideal mean - 0,5 (Ideal SD)	173.25 – < 222.75	Rather agree
4.	Ideal mean - 1,5 (Ideal SD)	123.75 – < 173.25	Disagree
5.	< Ideal mean - 1,5 (Ideal SD)	< 123.75	Strongly disagree

In order to ease the process of analyzing data, the researcher presented the score of students' perception which was classified in a frequency distribution table.

Table 4. The result of students' answer frequency in controlled technique

No	Statement	5	4	3	2	1	Score	Category
1	The teacher gives some jokes, songs or games (warm up)	20	22	23	1	0	259	Agree
2	The teacher gives more explanation about grammar	31	31	4	0	0	291	Strongly agree
3	The teacher gives some questions based on the material	12	37	16	1	0	255	Agree
4	The teacher gives English text that you can read or learn	25	34	5	2	0	281	Strongly agree

No	Statement	5	4	3	2	1	Score	Category
5	Repeat after the teacher says	21	31	14	0	0	269	Agree
6	Translate English to Indonesian or Indonesian to English	34	25	5	2	0	289	Strongly agree
7	The teacher reads the text and the students write down the text	8	33	18	7	0	233	Agree
8	The teacher shows the text and the students write down the text	10	38	17	1	0	247	Agree
9	The teacher reviews previous lesson	17	39	9	1	0	264	Agree
10	The teacher gives short quizzes	11	32	13	9	1	232	Agree
Average							262	Agree

According to the table above, the average of controlled technique is 262 and the category is “Agree” because the average is in interval $222.75 - <272.25$. It means that the controlled technique is categorized “Agree”. It implies that the teacher applied this technique in teaching. Out of the ten statements within the controlled technique, teacher’s teaching grammar is the most frequent activity, followed by translation activity in the classroom and assigning the students to read text.

Table 5. The result of students’ answer in semi controlled technique

No	Statement	5	4	3	2	1	Score	Category
11	The teacher assigns Group discussion	6	24	27	8	1	224	Agree
12	The teacher tells the story or intermezzo to make students happy	17	26	22	1	0	256	Agree
13	The teacher gives some questions to know your understanding	12	40	13	1	0	260	Agree
14	The teacher assigns conversation based on the text conversation given by teacher	16	32	18	0	0	261	Agree
15	The teacher assigns the students to describe the picture given by teacher	4	22	20	2	0	211	Rather agree
16	The teacher assigns sharing with other friends	6	32	17	1	0	229	Agree
17	The teacher gives summary about the lesson	11	40	10	4	1	253	Agree
Average							242	Agree

Based on the table above, the average of semi-controlled technique is 242 and the category is “Agree” because the average is in interval $222.75 < 272.25$. It means that the semi-controlled technique is categorized “Agree”. It implies that the teacher implemented this technique in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Among seven activities of semi-controlled technique the teacher did in the classroom, the most frequently done activity was that the teacher assigns conversation based on a text given, followed by teacher’s giving question to check students’ understanding and teacher’s telling a story as an intermezzo to make the students happy.

Table 6. The result of students’ answer in free technique

No	Statement	5	4	3	2	1	Score	Category
18	The teacher assigns drama with theme and plot based on your creativity	4	18	23	17	4	199	Rather agree
19	The teacher uses vary activities and games	24	20	15	5	2	257	Agree
20	The teacher assigns writing project	2	18	21	22	3	192	Rather agree
21	The teacher gives some cases and you solve the cases with your friends	10	22	21	9	4	223	Agree
22	The teacher assigns simulation	6	10	16	23	11	175	Rather agree
23	The teacher assigns interview activity during the lesson	2	19	27	14	4	199	Rather agree
24	The teacher uses discussion method during the lesson	5	24	28	6	3	220	Rather agree
25	The teacher uses English when he talks to you in daily activity	5	18	27	15	1	209	Rather agree
Average							209.25	Rather agree

Based on the table above, the average of free technique is 209.25 and the category is “Rather Agree” because the average is in interval $173.25 < 222.75$. It means that the free technique is categorized “Rather Agree”. The table above also shows which teaching activities the English teacher used most frequently in the classroom to teach English. It shows that using vary activities and games in the classroom was the most frequently activity the teacher did within free teaching technique. Meanwhile, teacher’s assignment of giving cases to students to solve with their friends was less frequently activity used by the teacher followed by teacher’s use of discussion method during the lesson.

Based on the results above, it is known that the English teacher' use of controlled teaching techniques at this private junior high school obtained 262 scores (37%), followed by semi-controlled technique with 242 scores (34%) and free technique with 209.25 scores (29%). Thus, it can be concluded that generally the teacher used all the three technique in teaching English although with different intensity. The most favored techniques by the teachers was controlled techniques, followed by semi-controlled techniques and free techniques.

The interview towards the student participants indicated that most students enjoy their teachers' teaching performance. They liked the way their teachers explain the materials and they said they felt the benefit of their teachers' drilling them with pronunciation practice and vocabulary building. They also enjoyed the dialogue drill during the lesson as they felt they could really use the English language for "real" communication. In term of the semi-controlled activities, the students expressed their positive reaction. They confessed that they enjoyed the story-telling very much; it is not only about the story they built but also about the opportunity the teacher gave to them to tell it to others. Many students also share positive perceptions toward their teachers' choice of free activities. The most interesting activity the students enjoyed was games, followed by role play and discussion.

DISCUSSION

As can be seen in the finding, this current study identified that both the teachers under the investigation employed controlled technique most frequently. This finding is line with what Galindo (2008) found in his study. He found that both teachers he observed used controlled teaching technique for one semester. He added that in their teaching techniques the teachers employed activity-centered lessons to help guide students' learning process. He also found that the students spend most of their time to work on language activities which was intended to practice their language features. From the interview, we found that most students had positive perception toward their teachers' teaching performance. They said that they enjoyed their teaching techniques and always had good time learning English with their teachers. This finding is similar to that discovered by Muhammad, Moslem and Sari (2017) that identified that most students had positive response toward their teacher's way of teaching reading comprehension. Out of 28 student participants, only 6 of them had negative perceptions toward their teacher's way of teaching. They assumed that their teacher could not help them, failed to motivate and attract them to study. They added that the classroom circumstances could not make them focus to study English properly. In general, however, most of the participants perceived their teacher as a successful teacher of reading comprehension. He could help the students, motivate and attract them to study English.

This current study also yielded similar result as Widayanti (2007) found in her study of students' perception toward teaching techniques of teaching reading. The student participants in her study had positive perception toward their teacher teaching technique of reading. They assumed that the teacher's technique in pre-reading, whilst teaching and post reading stages were effective. Meanwhile, compared to the study of Hasan, Alias, Saleh and Halizah (2017), the teachers in this current study was better considering the students' perceptions towards their teaching performance. Hasan, Alias, Saleh and Halizah (2017) found that students' perception toward their teachers' teaching performance was just slightly above average. Teachers' task performance which was least developed among the three dimensions may be the cause of their performance, while their adaptability performance was the highest even though it is still less than excellent. In general, they suggested that the teachers need to improve themselves.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion in the previous section, it can be drawn some conclusion as follow. First, based on the students' perception towards the teachers' teaching performance, the teachers used controlled techniques most frequently followed by semi-controlled techniques, and free techniques. The students' perception toward the teaching techniques is 59.1 in "agree category". It means that they have positive perception toward the English teacher's teaching techniques at this private junior high school. The most and the least favored technique can be seen from the result of perception. The most dominant technique in students' perception is controlled technique with frequency 262 into agree level. While the least dominant technique is free technique with frequency 209.25 into rather agree. The students of this private junior high school enjoyed the techniques applied by their teachers, that is why most of the students could learn English well, at least they were confident enough to show their skill in verbal English. Finally both of the teachers could maintain their teaching techniques as the students' perception was positive.

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