Insights into Classroom Dynamics: Indonesian EFL Teachers' Self-Efficacy in Instructional Strategies

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Abstract

Teachers' self-efficacy in instructional strategy has been indicated for its crucial role and function and its profound implications on teaching practices and student outcomes. This study aims to illuminate the intricate relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and their utilization of instructional strategies. Drawing upon Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, mixed-method research with convergent parallel design was employed to explore the perceptions and experiences of Indonesian EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers regarding their confidence in employing diverse instructional techniques within the classroom context. The data were collected through a questionnaire completed by 36 EFL teachers and semi-structured interviews involving six teachers. The results show that self-efficacy is pivotal in shaping instructional practices and highlight the need for targeted support and professional development initiatives to enhance teachers' confidence and competence in effectively employing varied instructional strategies. The results also show that learning facilities, time constraints, and curriculum change posed significant barriers to adopting certain strategies. This research contributes valuable insights to the field of EFL education, offering practical implications for teacher training programs and curriculum development efforts to optimize classroom dynamics and foster positive learning outcomes for students.

Keywords: Teacher’s self-efficacy, instructional strategy, EFL teachers.
INTRODUCTION

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education plays a crucial role in the global landscape, facilitating communication and fostering cross-cultural understanding. In recent years, Indonesia has witnessed a concerted effort to improve English language education as part of broader educational reforms aimed at enhancing global competitiveness and fostering economic development. As English continues to be the lingua franca of international communication, proficiency in the language is increasingly viewed as a gateway to opportunities in higher education, employment, and global citizenship (Sri Andayani, 2022). Consequently, the demand for qualified English language teachers has escalated, placing greater emphasis on the professional development and effectiveness of educators tasked with imparting English language skills to Indonesian learners. Therefore, EFL instruction in Indonesia has gained prominence as the nation seeks to equip its citizens with English proficiency to engage effectively in international arenas of academia, business, and diplomacy. Central to the success of EFL education is the efficacy of instructional strategies employed by teachers, who serve as key architects of learning experiences within the classroom (Salim Saif Al-Jardani, 2021).

The concept of self-efficacy, highlighted by Albert Bandura (Bandura, 2006), has gained significant attention in educational research due to its impact on teaching practices and student outcomes. Self-efficacy refers to individuals' beliefs in their capabilities to achieve specific performances, influencing EFL teachers' choice of instructional strategies, perseverance amidst challenges, and overall effectiveness in facilitating language learning (Lauermann & Berger, 2021; Zhang, 2023). Consequently, EFL teachers must adapt their strategies to meet language learning objectives and enhance students' proficiency (Choi & Lee, 2018). In this dynamic educational setting, the efficacy of instructional strategies becomes pivotal, affecting the quality of language instruction and students' learning outcomes (Lauermann & Berger, 2021; Poulou et al., 2019). Effective instructional strategies encompass diverse approaches aimed at engaging learners and fostering communicative competence, ranging from communicative language teaching to task-based learning and technology-assisted instruction, providing teachers with options to cater to their students' varied needs and preferences (Rahimi & Weisi, 2018).

At the core of teachers' decisions regarding instructional strategies lies teachers' confidence in self-efficacy, i.e., teachers' confidence in their ability to implement instructional strategies successfully and to facilitate meaningful learning experiences for their students (Babaei & Abednia, 2016). Bandura's social cognitive theory argues that self-efficacy beliefs greatly influence an individual's behaviour, motivation, and perseverance in the face of challenges (Bandura, 2000). In the context of English language teaching, teachers with high self-efficacy are more likely to adopt innovative instructional approaches, demonstrate greater resilience in overcoming barriers, and foster supportive learning environments conducive to English language learning (Choi & Lee, 2018; Lap et al., 2022a). In the Indonesian context, teaching English as a foreign language requires teachers to have not only a solid understanding of language acquisition theory and pedagogical strategies but also a strong belief in their own ability to teach English effectively to their students. This self-efficacy can greatly influence how teachers approach their lessons, interact with students, and ultimately contribute to the success of English learning in their classrooms (Bachtiar, 2020).

The influence of self-efficacy on teaching practice has been extensively studied and researched in various educational contexts. The study by Lap et al. (2022b) found that EFL teachers with high self-efficacy in instructional strategy positively impacted their learners’ motivation by using strategies for generating students’ initial motivation and maintaining students’ motivation. Other studies by Burić and Kim (2020b) and Yang et al. (2018) found an association between efficacy beliefs and teaching, indicating the importance of having high efficacy beliefs in instructional direction for optimal learning process and achievement. However, research focusing specifically on Indonesian EFL teachers' self-efficacy in utilizing instructional strategies is
scarce (Utami & Kuswandono, 2023). Exploring the perceptions and experiences of English teachers in Indonesia in this context is essential to gain nuanced insights into classroom dynamics and improve pedagogical practice. This is considering that cultural, linguistic, and institutional factors that are unique and different from other countries shape the landscape of English language teaching in Indonesia. This study aimed to address this gap by examining Indonesian EFL teachers' self-efficacy beliefs in using instructional strategies and their implications for classroom dynamics. By elucidating the factors that influence teachers' self-efficacy, identifying the strategies they perceive as most effective, and uncovering the challenges they encounter in implementing these strategies, this research aims to provide valuable insights into the complex interplay between teacher beliefs, instructional practices, and student learning outcomes in the Indonesian EFL context.

Through qualitative and quantitative inquiry approaches, this study seeks to understand the in-depth and comprehensive perspectives of EFL Indonesian teachers. It is also intended to better understand the intricacies of English teachers' professional experience and offer practical implications for teacher training programs and policy reforms to improve the quality of EFL education in Indonesia. By fostering a deeper understanding of teacher self-efficacy and its implications for instructional practice, this research seeks to contribute to effective aspects of contemporary pedagogy in the context of teaching, particularly EFL teaching and offers alternative interventions to further optimize learning dynamics in the classroom and promote more meaningful student learning experiences.

**METHOD**

This study adopted a mixed-method research design to comprehensively investigate Indonesian EFL teachers' self-efficacy in utilizing instructional strategies and their implications for classroom dynamics. Of the three types of mixed-method research, the current study employed a convergent parallel design. A mixed-method design is worth the research design because it integrates qualitative and quantitative approaches and allows for a multifaceted examination of teachers' perceptions, experiences, and practices within the Indonesian EFL context.

The participants were all junior high school EFL teachers in Polman Regency of West Sulawesi province of Indonesia. In the quantitative phase, the questionnaire was administered to the whole Indonesian EFL teachers in the target area to quantitatively assess their self-efficacy beliefs in the aspect of instructional practices. There were 36 EFL teachers participated in the questionnaire. The questionnaire included validated scales measuring teachers' self-efficacy in using instructional strategies adapted for the EFL context and the items of the frequency and perceived effectiveness of various instructional strategies. The questionnaire instrument underwent pilot testing for reliability and validity with a small group of EFL teachers before being administered to the entire sample. Data for the questionnaire were collected using Google Forms to facilitate respondents in providing their responses to the queried aspects. Descriptive statistics were calculated to analyse the quantitative data, including means, frequencies, and standard deviations.

In the qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted with purposive sampling. The interviews were designed to elicit in-depth insights into teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, perceptions of effective instructional strategies, and challenges in implementing these strategies. The interview protocol was developed based on the study's aims and was adjusted with the questions in the questionnaire. Six EFL teachers were involved in the interviews that were selected based on criteria such as teaching experience, educational background, and geographic location of the teaching site to ensure diversity and representativeness within the sample. The interviews were audio-recorded with the participant's consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis. The thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns, themes, and
variations in the participants' responses (Bachtiar et al., 2024). Coding was conducted iteratively, with codes refined and organized into overarching themes to capture the complexity and richness of the data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the key themes that emerged from the findings and discusses them with the relevant previous research. There were three key themes emerged: Indonesian EFL teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs, perceived effectiveness of instructional strategies, and challenges in implementing instructional strategies.

Indonesian EFL Teachers’ Self-Efficacy Beliefs

The qualitative analysis revealed that Indonesian EFL teachers exhibited varying degrees of self-efficacy in using instructional strategies. Some of the teachers expressed a high level of self-efficacy in their ability to use a variety of instructional techniques effectively and to help students improve their understanding of the material presented, but there were still some of them who reported feeling less self-efficacy, especially when faced with adjusting teaching strategies to the demands of the latest curriculum (i.e. Kurikulum Merdeka). Some of them also expressed rather difficulties when trying to integrate learning evaluation systems with current technology. What's interesting about the findings in this study is that the factors that influence teachers' self-efficacy correlate with their previous teaching experience, the pedagogical training they have attended, the perceived support from colleagues, and personal efficacy beliefs. Some previous research has also found that teachers' self-efficacy in instructional strategies positively impacts student outcomes (Jerez et al., 2021; Rahmat et al., 2020). When teachers believe in their ability to use effective teaching methods, students tend to perform better academically.

The respondents recognized that the self-efficacy of English language teachers in Indonesia plays a crucial role in enhancing the effectiveness of English language learning for students. Firstly, a solid understanding of the subject matter and teaching skills serve as the primary foundation. Teachers who believe in their ability to deliver material clearly and facilitate student understanding are more likely to create a positive and productive learning environment. Confidence in this ability enables them to adapt their teaching approach according to students' needs and interests, thus creating a more effective learning experience. This finding aligns with the findings of studies conducted by Zonoubi et al. (2017) and Choi and Lee (2018), which found that teachers with a strong understanding of the subject matter tend to be more confident in teaching. Another study by Lap et al. (2022a) also found that teachers who feel confident in their teaching abilities are more likely to use diverse and effective teaching strategies. This indicates a correlation between subject matter understanding and self-efficacy in the context of English language teaching in Indonesia. Additionally, research by Babaei and Abednia (2016) also shows that teachers who are confident in their teaching abilities have a positive impact on student motivation and achievement.

Another finding is that motivation and perseverance are crucial aspects of building the self-efficacy of English teachers in Indonesia. Internal motivation to continuously improve teaching quality and perseverance in facing challenges are key factors in developing self-efficacy. Teachers with high intrinsic motivation tend to persevere in facing obstacles that arise in the learning process. They view failure as an opportunity to learn and grow rather than a sign of weakness. Previous research has shown that intrinsic motivation, which originates from within the individual, has a strong relationship with teacher self-efficacy. For example, studies by Alamri et al. (2020) and Burić and Kim (2020a) found that teachers with high intrinsic motivation tend to have higher levels of self-efficacy in facing complex learning challenges. This finding provides a better understanding of the importance of motivation in influencing teachers' self-confidence in the context of English language teaching.
Furthermore, the aspect of perseverance or resilience has also been examined in the context of teacher self-efficacy. Research by Martínez-Padrón et al. (2022) indicates that teachers with high levels of perseverance tend to be more confident in their ability to overcome obstacles that arise during the learning process. Thus, increasing teacher perseverance can be an effective strategy for enhancing their self-efficacy in teaching English in Indonesia. In this context, support from school principals and colleagues can also play a crucial role in assisting teachers in developing perseverance and strengthening their self-efficacy.

One of the worthwhile findings is that teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs were perceived to be related to the ability to manage classroom dynamics and foster a positive learning environment, including addressing discipline issues and promoting student engagement. These findings show that the respondents of English teachers realized that self-efficacy is not only related to the effective use of instruction but also related to the ability to organize classes well and encourage active student involvement in the learning process. This is important because teachers’ self-efficacy in classroom management is linked to teacher job satisfaction and student behavior (Poulou et al., 2019; Rahimi & Weisi, 2018). Teachers with high self-efficacy in this area are better equipped to handle disruptive behavior and create a supportive learning environment.

Lastly, social and professional support also plays a significant role in strengthening the self-efficacy of English teachers in Indonesia. Collaboration with fellow teachers, support from school principals, and participation in training and workshops can enhance teachers’ self-confidence. Through the exchange of experiences and knowledge with professional colleagues, teachers can broaden their insights and gain a better understanding of effective teaching practices. This support provides an additional boost for teachers to continue to develop and improve their performance in the classroom. This is noteworthy as previous research has also highlighted the importance of social support in the context of teachers’ professional development and the enhancement of their self-efficacy. For instance, a study by Choong et al. (2020) found that support from colleagues and school principals can positively contribute to improving teachers’ self-efficacy. These findings suggest that positive interactions with colleagues and school principals can give teachers the confidence and support needed to overcome challenges in teaching English. Furthermore, according to Yoo (2016), teachers who are active in professional development activities tend to have higher levels of self-efficacy. The results of this study indicate that through participation in training and workshops, teachers can expand their knowledge and skills, which in turn can enhance their confidence in teaching English. Thus, colleagues and professional support from the work environment can be crucial factors in strengthening the self-efficacy of English teachers in Indonesia.

**Perceived Effectiveness of Instructional Strategies**

Across both questionnaire and qualitative interview responses, a consensus emerged regarding the perceived effectiveness of certain instructional strategies. Table 1 presents the results of the questionnaire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Item Statements</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>SD 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>I can use a variety of assessment strategies</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>I can provide an alternative explanation or some examples when students are confused</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I can construct good questions for my students</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>I can implement alternative strategies in my class</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>I can respond to difficult questions from my students</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>I can adjust my lessons to the proper level for individual students</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. I can measure student comprehension of what I have taught.  & 3.94 & 0.33 \\
8. I can provide appropriate challenges for very capable students & 3.97 & 0.38 \\

Note: 'SD (Standard Deviation) 
Two items with the highest mean scores are shaded with orange colours 
Two items with the lowest means scores are shaded with blue colours 

Items with the two highest mean scores of the instructional strategy were number 2 and number 4 (they are shaded with orange colours). This implies that, on average, the participants perceived that they have sufficient competencies in providing alternative explanations and implementing alternative strategies in teaching English. The two lowest mean scores were in number 1 and number 5 (they are shaded with blue colours), with mean scores of 3.89 and 3.92, respectively. This indicates that, on average, the participants did not have sufficient competencies in responding to difficult questions and using various assessment strategies. The results imply the necessity of providing EFL teachers with professional development on content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge, as well as assessment skills in English language teaching.

The findings from research also show the importance of teachers possessing a strong sense of self-efficacy to effectively identify and implement suitable teaching strategies, especially teaching English as a foreign language. In this sense, the participating teachers agreed that their self-efficacy could influence the instructional methods employed. Consistent with this finding, Lap et al. (2022b) also posit that teachers' self-efficacy pertains to an attribute employed by teachers within the classroom to enhance students' academic performance. In addition, teachers' self-efficacy has influenced their pedagogical approaches throughout the teaching and learning process. Teachers with greater experience are able to effectively manage a variety of challenges in relation to student behavior, foster conflicts that may arise with students, and implement appropriate strategies and techniques (Burić & Kim, 2020b). Furthermore, this discovery aligns with the research outcomes of certain scholars who propose that the instructional strategies, methods, and approaches utilized by teachers to enhance students' cognitive development may be influenced in part by their self-efficacy (Choi & Lee, 2018; Myyry et al., 2022; Poulou et al., 2019). Therefore, in the context of teaching English as a foreign language, the instructional strategies employed by teachers to teach English are positively impacted by their self-efficacy.

In line with the interview results, the participating teachers mentioned some teaching strategies that teachers most frequently use as conducive to promoting language acquisition, fostering communicative competence, and enhancing student engagement. These strategies are communicative language teaching, cooperative learning, and case-based methods. Interestingly, these strategies were valued for their ability to create interactive, student-centered learning environments that encourage active participation and meaningful language use. The mentioned strategies - communicative language teaching, cooperative learning, and case-based methods - align with findings from previous studies in the field of language education. Chen et al. (2022) and Karabassova and San Isidro (2023) emphasize communicative language teaching's effectiveness in promoting language acquisition by providing opportunities for students to engage in real-life communication situations. Similarly, the study by Zheng and Zhou (2022) on cooperative learning has shown its positive impact on language learning outcomes, as it fosters collaboration among students and enhances their language proficiency through peer interaction.

Moreover, the use of case-based methods in language teaching has been supported by research indicating its effectiveness in promoting critical thinking skills and language acquisition (Hidayati, 2021; Luo et al., 2018). These strategies are valued not only for their ability to facilitate language acquisition but also for their role in fostering communicative competence. Research by Gong et al. (2022) highlights the importance
of communicative competence in language learning, emphasizing the need for learners to develop not only grammatical accuracy but also the ability to use language appropriately in various contexts.

Another finding in the study is the emphasis on the importance of creating an interactive and student-centered learning environment. This is interesting because it resonates with the findings of studies on effective language teaching practices. Previous research has also underscored the importance of learner-centered approaches in language education, arguing that they promote active participation and meaningful use of language among students (Jaiswal, 2019; Ryan, 2020). Therefore, the alignment between the teaching strategies identified and previous research underscores their potential to increase student engagement and promote language acquisition in the Indonesian context.

However, while certain strategies were widely endorsed, there were variations in the participating teachers’ implementation based on contextual factors such as class size, student proficiency levels, and available resources. These teachers expressed the need for flexibility and adaptation in selecting and modifying instructional strategies to suit the specific needs and preferences of their students.

Challenges in Implementing Instructional Strategies

Despite their belief in the effectiveness of various instructional strategies, Indonesian EFL teachers identified several challenges in their implementation. Limited resources, including inadequate teaching materials, classroom infrastructure, and technological support, posed significant barriers to adopting certain strategies, particularly those requiring technology integration or specialized materials. In addition, lack of training, time pressure, and a dense curriculum were also highlighted as challenges.

Regarding resource and facility limitations, many schools in Indonesia still lack adequate resources such as up-to-date textbooks, technological devices, or sufficient classroom space to support interactive learning. According to respondents, this can pose a barrier to implementing modern instructional strategies that require the use of technology or collaborative activities in the classroom. Several previous studies have identified resource limitations as a significant factor in the education context of developing countries like Indonesia. Studies by Mensah et al. (2023) and Suharno et al. (2020) highlight that the majority of schools in developing countries, including Indonesia, face challenges in providing adequate resources, including textbooks, technological devices, and infrastructure needed to support interactive learning.

Furthermore, research by Katemba (2020) indicates that limited access to technology and adequate learning facilities is a major barrier to the utilization of technology-based learning approaches in schools across Indonesia. These findings suggest that resource constraints can hinder the implementation of modern instructional strategies that necessitate the use of technology in classrooms. Teachers in schools with resource constraints may face additional challenges in creating a supportive and adequate learning environment for the development of students' language skills. Thus, findings from previous studies consistently support that resource and facility limitations are significant challenges in the education context of developing countries like Indonesia. This also impacts the ability of English language teachers to implement effective instructional teaching strategies.

Lack of training and professional development poses a significant challenge. According to the participants, many English language teachers in Indonesia still lack access to adequate training, leading to a lack of knowledge regarding the latest teaching strategies and best practices in English language instruction. This lack of knowledge and skills can impede teachers' ability to effectively utilize instructional strategies tailored to their students' needs. Li and Walsh (2023) highlight that appropriate and quality training is a crucial factor in improving teachers' performance and student learning outcomes. Insufficient training in modern teaching strategies, such as active teaching techniques or project-based approaches, can hinder teachers' ability to leverage effective approaches to teaching English.
Additionally, previous research has also underscored the importance of support from schools and the education system in facilitating teachers' professional development (Karacabey, 2021; Opfer & Pedder, 2011). The lack of support from school principals or local governments in providing quality training and professional development can pose an additional barrier for teachers in developing their skills in implementing effective instructional teaching strategies. Thus, the findings from this study and previous studies affirm that the lack of training and professional development is a significant challenge for teachers in implementing effective instructional teaching strategies and that support from schools and the education system also plays a crucial role in addressing these challenges.

The last challenge highlighted by the respondents is related to time pressure and a dense curriculum. Faced with learning targets that must be met within a specified timeframe, teachers may feel constrained in selecting and implementing more interactive and in-depth instructional strategies. This can lead to the use of more traditional teaching approaches that are less focused on the development of sustainable English language skills. In this regard, several previous studies have identified time pressure and a dense curriculum as factors influencing the quality of teaching and learning in various educational contexts. Conrad (2013) and Isumarni et al. (2023) emphasize that high time pressure can cause teachers to rush through lesson delivery, thereby hindering teaching effectiveness. In the context of a dense curriculum, English language teachers in Indonesia may feel limited in selecting and implementing teaching strategies that allow them to cover all subject matter in sufficient detail and adequacy.

Furthermore, an overly dense curriculum can lead to teaching approaches focusing on achieving predetermined learning targets or objectives rather than considering the students' learning process. This can result in teachers prioritizing the delivery of information over the development of deep and sustainable language skills (Chan, 2021; van Ha et al., 2021). Therefore, the pressure to achieve specific targets and standards within a designated timeframe can lead to the use of more traditional and limited teaching strategies, which may be less effective in promoting deep understanding and meaningful language use by students. Thus, the findings from previous studies affirm that time pressure and a dense curriculum are significant challenges for teachers in implementing effective instructional teaching strategies. Striking a balance between achieving curriculum targets and facilitating the development of sustainable language skills for students is important to address these challenges.

Implications For Practice And Policy

The findings of this study have several implications for enhancing the efficacy of EFL instruction, especially in the Indonesian context. First, targeted professional development programs should be designed to address teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and provide them with the necessary support and resources to implement innovative instructional strategies effectively. Second, curriculum reforms should prioritize the integration of student-centered, communicative approaches to language teaching while also allowing for flexibility and adaptation based on local contexts and resources. Curriculum developers should collaborate closely with teachers to co-design materials and activities that are relevant, culturally responsive, and aligned with learners' needs and interests. Finally, systemic changes at the policy level are needed to address structural barriers and promote an enabling environment for effective EFL instruction.

This study provides valuable insights into the complex interplay between self-efficacy, instructional strategies, and classroom dynamics in the Indonesian EFL context. By examining teachers' perceptions, experiences, and practices, this research may contribute to a deeper understanding of the factors influencing EFL instruction and offer practical recommendations for enhancing the quality and effectiveness of language teaching in Indonesia. Through targeted interventions at the individual, institutional, and policy levels,
stakeholders can work collaboratively to empower EFL teachers, optimize instructional practices, and ultimately, promote positive learning outcomes for Indonesian learners.

CONCLUSION

This study delves into the diverse landscape of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction in Indonesia, focusing on Indonesian EFL teachers' self-efficacy in utilizing instructional strategies and its impact on classroom dynamics. Employing both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, the research uncovers the factors influencing teachers' self-efficacy, the perceived effectiveness of instructional strategies, and the hurdles faced in their application. It highlights how higher self-efficacy correlates with more innovative, persistent, and adaptable teaching methods, fostering engaging, student-centered learning environments and positive outcomes. Nevertheless, significant challenges such as limited resources, time constraints, and curriculum demands impede the full realization of effective strategies, necessitating systemic reforms and policy interventions. Recommendations include prioritizing teacher training and professional development to enhance self-efficacy and equip educators with the necessary skills and resources for impactful instruction. These insights pave the way for improving EFL instruction in Indonesia and fostering a conducive learning environment.

DAFTAR PUSTAKA


