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STIMULATING LANGUAGES AND LEARNING

Global Perspectives and Community Engagement

Gavin Austin

Shirley O'Neill

**University of Southern
Queensland**



1 Stimulating Languages and Learning

**Global Perspectives
and Community Engagement**

Gavin Austin

Shirley O'Neill

University of Southern Queensland

Editors



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1 **Stimulating Languages
and Learning**
**Global Perspectives
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Gavin Austin

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University of Southern Queensland

Editors

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5.

The Effective language pedagogy of Madrasah Tsanawiyah English teachers following professional in-service teacher training in Indonesia

Moch. Imam Machfudi

State Institute of Islamic Studies (LAIN) Jember, Indonesia

imam.machfudi@gmail.com

In the last two decades, Indonesia faced the challenge of improving the quality of education in the most neglected schools, especially in the Islamic school sector. This study investigates the successful implementation of a teacher training program called English Language Training for Islamic Schools (ELTIS). ELTIS was an AusAid funded program run between 2007 and 2010 to improve the quality of the teaching of English in marginalised schools based on the introduction of more learner-centred communicative language teaching (CLT) methods. This qualitative inquiry aims to expose key features of effective practice of English language teaching in Islamic secondary junior schools known as Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs), including their ability to adopt better practices. The narrative inquiry method was adopted to explore the lived experiences of eight teachers of English in the rural madrasahs. This inquiry seeks to contribute to a deep understanding of how English language training and English language teaching (ELT) professional development benefited teachers of English in MTs with regard to effective language pedagogy.

Background

In the Indonesian education sector, there is a need for significant development and improvement of professional in-service teacher training. In 2007 to 2010, the Australian government through AusAid supported the commencement of the development of outreach and training projects and programs to improve the quality of English language teaching in the Islamic junior secondary schools sector. The community of practice welcomed this program. For example, Rohmah (2010) reported that the teacher training has given opportunities to MT teachers to participate in improving the quality of language teaching and learning.

To date, madrasahs are often the only educational institutions available in rural and remote areas, where they serve the poorest members of Indonesia's population. This situation of educational inequality is the result of State education being concentrated in towns and cities. Furthermore, it is common for teachers in rural areas to attend one village school in the morning and travel to another village in the afternoon to teach. Under these sociocultural conditions, the educational drawbacks were potentially complex. In addition, there was an extreme lack of teachers' ability in teaching English in the rural madrasahs (Parker & Raihani, 2011; Rohmah & Bentley, 2007). In the madrasah sub-sector, teachers of private madrasah, in particular, faced a series of problems in enhancing their own teaching competencies. Previous studies (e.g., Rohmah, 2010; Salmon, 2012) revealed that their competence was impacted by a lack of ELT knowledge and teaching skills (ELTIS, 2007).

In the Islamic Education Sub-Sector (IESS), the majority of madrasah teachers have been educated within the Islamic education system, which has traditionally prepared teachers to teach religious content studies. The directorate general of Islamic education of the Ministry of Religious Affairs estimated that 80% of madrasah teachers are from religious studies backgrounds, and that the subject matter is not relevant to their teaching positions and qualifications (Ali et al., 2011).

The Asian Development Bank (2006) reported that, in the 2003 Madrasah Education sub-sector Assessment (MESA)'s document, there were approximately 6 million children, meaning that nearly 15% of school enrolments attend madrasahs. This figure is significantly higher at junior secondary level, estimated in 2002 at 21%. Further statistics indicate that, in the 2004-2005 school year, there were 40,258 madrasahs across Indonesia, representing 22% of all schools in the country, with only around 4,000 of them state-run (Asian Development Bank, 2006). The statistics show that the majority of students go to private madrasahs (Rohmah & Bentley, 2007). Apart from their conditions, many madrasahs have inappropriate educational facilities, including classrooms, learning tools, and resources for teachers to develop their knowledge and information, including instructional materials. The numbers of private madrasahs, which are larger than those of government-funded madrasahs, make private madrasahs play a pivotal role in the Indonesian educational system. This situation challenges the teachers in those areas to move toward quality enhancement basically in improving their ELT knowledge and skills. The Ministry desired a change in pedagogy and saw the potential to adopt the program throughout rural areas of Eastern Indonesia. They welcomed the AusAid program as a means of minimising inequality in education in an attempt to enhance educational opportunities for marginalised children.

English Language Training for Islamic Schools (ELTIS), which carried out in-service language training for teachers in the most disadvantaged areas of Indonesia, was aimed at improving teachers' capability in teaching English in Islamic secondary schools. In 2007, 771 district teachers of MTs were selected and invited to follow the professional English language training by introducing more learner-centred CLT principles. This study inquired what effective language pedagogy the successful teachers of English at MTs have practised since receiving the ELTIS training.

Methodology

Narrative inquiry

One of the traditions in qualitative research is narrative inquiry (Creswell, 2012). The endeavour to research experiences has been the focus of the narrative inquiry approach (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Narrative inquiry investigates the way a story is told by considering the viewpoint of the participants (Webster & Mertova, 2007). By using a narrative approach, this study is leading in theory-building in the social sciences. As a relatively new area of research (Chase, 2005), story-telling is being used to capture teachers' views and experiences in their language of choice when discussing their experience of ELTIS. Therefore, there is a philosophical rationale for employing narrative inquiry.

The reason for taking up narrative inquiry in this research is that this study attempts to explore the range of opinions and arguments involved, and narrative inquiry allows the multiple lenses to be accessed for examining the experiences of the participants. Stories by teachers could appropriately deepen teachers' reflections on their practices. Participants express their experiences and the researcher captures their understanding precisely. By contrast, reliance on a researcher's recall of views and experiences from written notes at an interview may act as a filter to the reality, accuracy and richness of the data gained from a narrative inquiry. Thus, this study reflected the fact that this method has been able to provide a deep understanding of teacher and teacher educator's efforts in improving their own practices through their lived experiences (Clandinin, Pushor, & Murray Orr, 2007).

The narrative inquiry employed in this study is the way of researching teachers' lived experiences after joining professional language training, and thus their stories represent the journey of what they know and how they know (Johnson & Golombek, 2002). Based on Dewey's (1916) educational philosophy, every one of us is a knower who reflects our knowledge through our experiences. Narrative

inquiry has played a pivotal role in researching educational practices through teachers' lived experiences since then (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Johnson & Golombek, 2002). Thus, the emphasis of narrative research has been on the participants' lived experiences in interaction with the researcher. This narrative inquiry represents the participants' point of view in teaching English before, during and after ELTIS teacher training through their reflections and stories.

Participants

The participants of this research were: (i) eight English teachers from Islamic junior secondary schools in three different districts in East Java, Indonesia; (ii) two school principals from two different districts; (iii) one ELTIS regional coordinator in the Surabaya centre; (iv) one key teacher in a teacher support group (MGMP) in the district of Bondowoso; (v) two ELTIS master trainers from East Java; (vi) one district trainer from the district of Bondowoso; (vii) one ELTIS team leader in Denpasar, Bali; and (viii) two different teacher support groups. There were 34 participants altogether. The research sites were eight rural schools in three districts in East Java province. The schools were in the district of Bondowoso (three schools), Probolinggo district (three schools) and Pamekasan district in Madura Island (two schools). There were also two Focus Group Discussions (FGD), one in Bondowoso district and one in Probolinggo district.

Data collection and analysis

This study used a range of qualitative methods. In qualitative research, two primary data collection methods are observation and interviews (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Hatch, 2002). Other collection techniques also used to enrich the quality of the data were document analysis and audio-visual recordings. Observations of classroom practice were used to identify the strategies enacted by competent teachers of English, including the teaching techniques and the learners' activities that the

teachers developed themselves. During observation of these activities, video recording as well as photographing were employed in an attempt to obtain authentic pictures of classroom activities.

Narrative interviews were designed to gather data about the participants' remembered experience before, during, and after the ELTIS training. Narrative interviews were employed to enable a smooth discussion. The narrative interview, as suggested by Jovchelovith and Bauer (2006), had proved encouraging, and stimulated teachers as informants to tell a story about some significant events in their lives and social context in relation to their role as teachers. Interviews addressed to the selected MT English teachers were intended to obtain information on aspects of language pedagogy they had gained from the ELTIS training. These included their understanding of communicative language teaching, and the role of motivational strategies in improving students' learning. I interviewed eight teachers through stories of their experiences teaching in their district madrasahs. The collated data were then analysed by transcribing, categorising and systematically coding, analysing thematically, translating and interpreting. All the analysis processes were then validated by using data validation techniques of member checking, data sources, and searching for disconfirming evidence. To do this, I provided the participants with a transcript of their talk for confirmation of its authenticity and accuracy.

Document analysis was designed to examine the ELTIS project database, the design documents, the exit sustainability report, the activity completion report, the teacher portfolios or progress reports, the training manuals and the modules. I utilised document analysis as a means of tracking change and development (Bowen, 2009) in which various documents of particular events such as ELTIS activity records or progress reports were used to identify the changes. Apart from document analysis, two focus group discussions were done to collect the data about teachers' perspectives and compare their experiences as individuals in teaching English after the ELTIS training.

Ethical considerations

The participants in this study were protected by the *National statement on ethical conduct in human research* (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2007). By referring to a code of ethics, the participants were protected from social stigma by using anonyms or pseudonyms when determining, citing, and reflecting the information from them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), and their information was secured at each stage of this research. First, while in the field, the data was kept in electronic devices such as cameras, recorders, and other electronic devices I used in the data collection. Second, the interview data was kept in my own laptop, and I had some copies in my own hard drive and USB. Third, the data was transferred to a locked computer in my locked office, and only I had the access to the data. This ethical consideration ensured that the research participants obtained benefit(s) from their involvement as participants in this study as well. Their voices are recorded and reported without revealing any information that might threaten or endanger their career as a teacher.

Results and discussion

The data analysis process from the ELTIS documents, classroom observations, narrative interviews, and focus group discussion indicated that the teachers have adapted and implemented effective pedagogic practice. There were examples of enactment of ELTIS practice in the rural madrasahs where the teachers derived benefits from employing CLT within their context. The teachers improved their capability in engaging students in enjoyable and authentic student-centred activities. This was not usually the practice of English teaching in such sociocultural conditions. The pedagogic practice previous to the ELTIS training was described in the ELTIS design document as follows:

At school level it was known that teachers were adopting fairly traditional styles of teaching, which tended to be teacher-centred and text-book driven, with little evidence of lesson planning.

English lessons were often taught through the medium of the Indonesian language, with many instances of long teacher explanations of grammatical points without any contextualisation, followed by monotonous exercises (ELTIS, 2007, p. 4).

The document says that the teaching model has been found to be ineffective in engaging students to learn English. It was also reported that the teachers were often using cheaply-produced student worksheets called *Lembar Kerja Siswa* (LKS), which, besides being poor in quality, often provided an old-fashioned and inappropriate model of English, with a focus on reading, writing and grammar. The document also reported that some teachers were showing that their English skills had decreased since leaving university or teacher training college, as they no longer have the opportunity to practice English regularly to maintain a high level of fluency.

It appeared that the national curriculum change had impacted on English language teaching in junior secondary schools, including MTs. A particular challenge for teachers had been learning how to comprehend and implement both the new Competency-Based Curriculum introduced in 2004 called *Kurnas* 2004, as well as the School-Based Curriculum introduced in 2006 by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). The newly introduced curriculum required teachers to have upgraded language skills, particularly listening and speaking, and enriched teaching strategies for the new competency as well. There were not enough training and socialisation of the new curriculum except little information, but not subject-specific. To complicate matters, teachers in private madrasahs are not well-paid and schools are not well funded.

The data from ELTIS (2010) displayed evidence that ELTIS's endeavours have shown relevant benefits in minimising the complicated drawbacks. Changes in classroom behaviour had been the other key benefit in improving teachers' capabilities in the classroom practices. Teachers had essentially changed their strategies from teacher-centred teaching to student-centred activities through language games, pair work, group work, and other fun and authentic

learning activities which focused on improving students' engagement in learning English. The teachers also demonstrated ability in adapting, into their context, materials which meet students' needs. Table 1 shows the changes made by the teachers in their classroom practices.

Table 1: Differences identified by the document analysis

Before ELTIS	After ELTIS
Teachers employ traditional learning methods	Teachers employ fun and authentic learning activities
Teacher-centred and textbook-driven	Engage learner-centred approach
Little evidence of lesson planning	Meaningful communicative activities
Using cheaply printed students' worksheets with old-fashioned and inappropriate models of English	Engage students in pair work and group work
Focus on grammar with monotonous exercises without contextualisation	Teachers adapt materials to meet students' needs in their context
Ineffective teaching model for improving learner motivation	Focus on improving students' motivation and engagement in learning English

Prior to the ELTIS training, there was a lack of in-service teacher training for teacher professional development. The ELTIS training brought in an innovative idea in education, that is, an endeavour to provide an alternative way of teaching for better learning outcomes. Educational innovation carried out by the ELTIS training established a significant contribution to the improvement of teachers' capabilities of English language pedagogy. The innovation covered designing new teaching and learning strategies by engaging in meaningful communicative activities for language learning.

The implementation of the communicative language teaching approach in the Indonesian context

This approach to ELT has been developed mainly in English-speaking countries. However, adopting an English as a Second Language (ESL) approach may not always fit the needs of the rest of the world. To give an example, it is common in Indonesian schools that communication is made in a local language such as Madurese, Javanese, Balinese or other local languages nationwide. The national language (Bahasa Indonesia) is still utilised only in classroom and formal meetings. Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has been much more difficult in a situation where many languages are involved. Meanwhile, much of the CLT literature has been produced in the western world and has a bias in a number of ways. For example, Byram (1997) argued that ELT market textbooks typically model situations using CLT that are often Western in outlook for ESL contexts. Thus, it creates a problem for the communication base of authenticity that makes demands on the levels of learner competence and autonomy not always equally accessible to learners in all contexts (Salmon, 2012), where EFL is not regularly used outside the learning environment.

The principal theoretical concept in CLT is “communicative competence”, a term introduced into discussions of language use and second or foreign language learning in the early 1970s (Hymes, 1972) and reiterated since then (e.g., Canale & Swain, 1980; Harmer, 1982; Larsen-Freeman, 2008; Savignon, 2007). The word competence is defined in terms of the expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning, and looks at both psycholinguistic and socio-cultural perspectives in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research to account for its development (Krashen, 1982; Savignon, 2007; Schumann, 1978). In the endeavour of conveying the meaning of CLT in pre-service and in-service teacher training of English as a second or foreign language in a number of contexts, it is important to consider the communicative curriculum to bring thematic activities or experiences related to language use and not usage. CLT as viewed by

Larsen-Freeman (2008) aims mainly to make communicative competence the main goal of language teaching by admitting the interdependence of language and communication. Likewise, Brown (2007) stated:

If communicative competence is the goal of a language classroom, instruction needs to point toward all of its components: organisational, pragmatic, strategic, and psychomotoric. Therefore, communicative goals are best achieved by giving attention to language use and not just usage, to fluency and not just accuracy, to authentic language and contexts, and to students' needs for real communication (p.13).

Being introduced in the early 1970s, CLT as a theory was not new. However, the majority of teachers in rural areas of Indonesia, particularly in the three regions under scrutiny, had not heard of this approach previously, and some had heard but with minimum understanding about the approach and the implementation of it. The main concern of implementing CLT was a need for change from the traditional way of teaching into innovative strategies. Common practice of English language teaching in the districts was based on the "chalk and talk" method, where a teacher wrote sentences on the blackboard with a piece of chalk to be copied and read repeatedly by students, followed by the teacher's explanation of grammar points. The language teaching innovation employed more fun learning activities in pair work or group work and language games, and thus engaged students in learning English as well.

The narrative interview results from teachers' lived experiences showed that they knew how to enact materials, teaching methodology, classroom management, and strategies for engaging students in learning English. The results showed that the district teachers had significantly adopted pedagogic practice carried out by ELTIS in quite a short period of time. It also indicated that the teachers improved their capabilities, including language knowledge and skills in teaching English, which was the impact of the ELTIS training. The quotes below are evidence from the narrative interview

with the English teachers. In a rural madrasah in the district of Bondowoso, a teacher said:

Before following the program of ELTIS, I teach my students er...only I get from the book then there is no games, there is no er...something like what I learned in ELTIS ya. For example, when I got some topic in the book, then I write it on the blackboard and I ask my student to read it and then er... I translate it er...in Indonesian er... sometime I ask my student to write sentences from the book er...on the board and check the meaning in er...dictionary. But after following ELTIS program it is different way to teach so I'm very happy following the ELTIS program. Then er...at the first time I teach English they dislike English so much. After I er...using the rules, any rule in the ELTIS program they love English very much (interview: TB2_pp1_19 August 2014).

The above interview showed that changes in teaching practice occurred once the teacher had done the ELTIS training. It was found that ELTIS was able to change the teachers' view and give them a wider perspective on teaching English by engaging fun and authentic activities. The teacher was also equipped with skills in adapting materials and delivering the lesson effectively. The teacher was very enthusiastic about the newly-learned teaching methodology used by ELTIS. A change also happened in the students' behaviour. The students previously hated English because it was a difficult subject to learn. However, when the teacher implemented the ELTIS way, the students' behaviour changed from hate to love. The knowledge of language pedagogy gained by the teachers showed that the training had successfully coloured the way the teacher teaches. The ELTIS team leader revealed the reason for employing the communicative approach:

Right, now, we talk about the CLT approach. Why did we choose that? Well, we knew already, first, teachers weren't qualified, many, many of them weren't qualified as English teachers. They haven't done any language teacher training. So we knew from our observation that they were using the blackboard and generally LKS, and we knew that that wasn't an effective approach...It

made sense that we need to try and bring that (i.e., the communicative approach) into the ELTIS program. We weren't hoping for a miracle but we were hoping for at least a shift away from "chalk and talk" into just some simple "pair work", "group work" activities er...more student-centred activities where teachers were speaking less (interview: ETL_clt_15 September 2014).

Most of the teachers under study confirmed that, in their previous experience, they usually used traditional methods in delivering a lesson. After the training, their knowledge and skills improved significantly. In an interview with another teacher named Aisa (a pseudonym), when asked about the differences in their teaching before and after the ELTIS training, she said:

Before [ELTIS], I think I used to teach using conventional techniques, for example, like students like er...always...the common practice is, "open your book, this page..." I only explain something and then students try to er...try to write or do some tasks after I explain...then they repeat what we said, for example, we explain about vocabulary and then they just copied what we were saying. Ya. Again they er...repeat the vocabulary for example, maybe er..."you have to memorise about er..." I give them twenty or thirty new vocabulary they have to memorise at their home, and then after that when we met again in the next week they have to er...maybe I call their name then they come in front of the class and then they er...they tell to their other friends the vocabularies that they have learned. For example, "chair is kursi" or maybe the subject is about colour and then they have er...they just said er..."red merah, yellow kuning", until thirty new vocabulary that they have to memorise at home, like that. And then I give them command, "OK, open your book, your task, or your worksheet or LKS now", and then they have to do number one until number ten and then you have to do this [laughter] like that. But after joining ELU we know that some materials and techniques may be based on the topic and some of them er...based on the problem-solving. For example like narrative, when we learn about genre type. Ya, about passage of narrative text about criminal about professional like the problems

then we solve the problem, very fun and authentic learning, I think. You know about lots of er...games and songs and then we did brainstorming we didn't do in the conventional techniques anymore (interview: TB3_pp1_20 August 2014).

The above story confirmed her professional learning privilege to be involved in the ELTIS training. Previously she felt a bit frustrated by her inability to find a technique that engaged her students to be active in classroom lessons. She used to employ an "open your LKS technique", where she assigned students to do exercises 1 to 10, and then asked the students to repeat the sentences she read. To follow up the activity, she asked her students to continue reading sentences from the worksheet without further meaningful activities. But after joining ELTIS, she claimed to love the methods she had gained from the training because the methods have been applicable to her situation. She also easily adapted materials that engaged her students to improve their English.

She has made a fundamental change in her behaviour from common practice considered to be conventional teaching technique, for instance, memorisation of "the vocabulary of colours" into ELTIS strategy, where topic-based and genre-based lessons were enacted in a more communicative language learning activity. Moreover, the use of language games made her lesson more enjoyable, where students were able to communicate their ideas in, for example, problem-solving tasks. She did not assign students to memorise twenty to thirty words a day without meaningful activities any more. She ensured that she had left behind the conventional technique of teaching.

In a broader sense, the pedagogic competence of the MT English teachers has been determined by the extent to which teachers effectively engaged strategies from ELTIS, and how language was acquired by students in particular situations. The classroom observations showed how they prepared, implemented, and reflected on their teaching. The teachers said that they had never been able to do these activities before they had the ELTIS training. ELTIS had

focused on key principles of CLT and basic classroom planning and management. ELTIS principles included lesson planning, managing the class, using visual aids, error correction, teacher talk, and a range of teaching techniques. The classroom observation results provided below validate the interview results.

Aisa appeared confident and friendly and engaging as well. She built up a good rapport with the students. She used English all the time. When a student did not understand, she repeated the instructions. When she instructed students to work in pairs, she walked around to monitor students' conversations. She came close to them and engaged the students in producing sentences she had exemplified beforehand. She encouraged a girl:

T: "OK, Irma, say it again."

S1: "What's your favourite food?"

T: "Good...good, Irma. OK, Indah, what's your favourite food?"

S2: "My favourite food is ayam goreng."

T: "Ayam goreng? Fried...?"

S2: "Fried chicken."

T: "Good. Say it again. My fave...!"

S2: "My favourite food is fried chicken."

T: "Excellent! OK, continue your conversation!"

(classroom observation: TB3_tp_20 August 2014)

Classroom observations indicated that Aisa and most teachers in this study had employed the CLT approach through enjoyable and authentic learning activities. In this context, the teaching and learning strategies enacted by the teachers had been effective in improving students' engagement in learning English. Furthermore, the Communicative English Language Teacher Training (CELTT) introduced by ELTIS was designed both to consolidate and encourage reflection on current knowledge and skills, and also to

introduce new ideas and techniques. The CELTT emphasised the importance and value of lesson planning, not usually emphasised in CLT. Through the process of plan-teach-reflect, CELTT also encouraged teachers to evaluate their own teaching styles and the effect the teaching-learning process had on their learners (ELTIS, 2007). CELTT also provided samples of teacher talk in scaffolding students' learning of English, such as those exemplified in Walsh (2006). This practice was different from regular CLT training and was designed to help EFL teaching of students in rural areas of Indonesia. Similarly, Shamsipour and Allami (2012) provided effective CLT by using teachers' talk to scaffold students' learning of English in an Iranian context. Even though CLT has been embedded in children's learning, it is not necessary for CLT to be applied in daily communication outside the classroom. The fundamental value is that, in those rural or remote areas, the challenge of learning a language is not stopped.

Teachers' reflection

Teachers' reflection represented a way a teacher reflected and thought about his/her teaching performance. It was about what had been done, what should have been done, and what was left undone in his/her teaching. For example, data from classroom observations showed that Salim, a male teacher, was aware of implementing effective classroom management. An interview after the classroom observation confirmed his understanding of how to handle two disruptive students, named Ferry and Iwan. He claimed that Ferry should be taken away from Iwan. When Ferry was with Iwan, their interaction appeared to disturb other students. They made noises and especially disturbed the girls in front of them. His trialling of separating both students was proven to stop students' negative attitudes.

The example was concerned with the teacher's awareness of classroom management, which combines essential characteristics of classroom organisation and discipline. An effective teacher can

maintain those characteristics. Classroom organisation dealt with the procedures used by teachers to establish learning and manage the students and the classroom, in order that the teaching and learning process can occur. This view is in accordance with Emmer and Stough (2001), where teachers have the ability to manage the classroom and obtain the students' cooperation. Further in his reflection, Salim said:

Sebelum ikut ELTIS, saya tidak mengerti bagaimana memenej kelas. Ada pengalaman menarik, dulu siswa itu kalau ada saya datang mau ngajar bahasa Inggris itu, mereka melarikan diri. Mereka tidak mau belajar bahasa Inggris dengan saya. Tapi setelah dapat cara ELTIS dan itu saya terapkan, maka kalau saya kebetulan tidak bisa mengajar, mereka mencari-cari saya. Saya memahami teknik dan strategi mengajar ala ELTIS dan bahkan saya bisa belajar banyak tentang manajemen kelas dan kedisiplinan. Seperti yang saya lakukan terhadap Iwan dan Ferry tadi itu saya pelajari dari ELTIS (interview: TB1_ref_25 August 2014).

(Translation: Before having the ELTIS training, I was not aware of how to manage the classroom. I had an interesting experience, the students used to run away from me when they saw me coming to the class for teaching. They did not want to learn English with me. But after getting the ELTIS way and I implemented the strategy, then when I could not come to teach they looked for me. I understand teaching techniques and strategies a la ELTIS, and I even learned a lot about classroom management and maintaining discipline. What I did to Iwan and Ferry was what I learned from ELTIS)

The classroom observations and interviews revealed that most teachers who were involved in this study had changed their teaching techniques from giving students all the information about grammatical rules to working in pairs or group work, or doing projects. This situation of learning had given students a chance for a greater level of responsibility to participate in classroom activities. For example, in a group work activity, the students felt comfortable listening to their peers and discussing and finishing a project. By

employing the ELTIS approach, the teachers had demonstrated good practice in improving learners' engagement in learning English.

Teachers in those disadvantaged areas improved their knowledge and skills in language teaching. Through reflection on their practices, the teachers were aware that the attainment of a good quality education was determined by their deep understanding of the teaching profession. Furthermore, innovation in English language teaching brought about by ELTIS was considered successful in improving teachers' language ability and capability, as epitomised in the above instances. Referring to their reflection, teachers had the ability to maintain classroom management including discipline problems. Those teachers were capable of handling the hindrances to the teaching and learning process in their classrooms. Thus, they showed evidence of being effective teachers who employed effective pedagogic practices in their areas.

Limitations of the study

I recognise some limitations of this study. Firstly, the learner-centred approach in the rural socio-cultural context as a model of the practice for educational innovation in English Language Teaching could have wider social impact. However, this research provides only a little evidence about this. In the socio-cultural conditions with limitations that exist, this model should be extended to those teachers in the districts who were not involved in the ELTIS training. Secondly, this inquiry has focused on exploring the pedagogical competence of selected teachers identified as practising ELTIS strategies in teaching English in MTs. The next study could potentially investigate other teachers who did not implement the ELTIS practices following the training in order to compare the effects. Thirdly, this study did not specifically examine the impact of the ELTIS training on students' outcomes because a much longer time would be needed to do it, and with more funding. My study has been restricted by the available time and the financial constraints of the limited scholarship funding.

Future research should therefore involve larger areas that investigate students' learning outcomes as well.

Conclusion

Apart from the stated limitations of the study above, there could have been further unpredicted outcomes that lay outside my investigative gaze in this study. Yet, it is hoped that my well-meant effort could be of value to a wider audience in education, not necessarily only for rural Indonesia. This narrative inquiry has exposed key features of effective practice of English language teaching in MTs (Islamic secondary junior schools), including their ability to adopt better practices. Effective language pedagogy in the madrasah education sector carried out by ELTIS to improve teachers' ability in the most disadvantaged districts has shown positive impacts. The teachers' improvements on pedagogic practices were evident. The classroom observations, narrative interviews, and teachers' reflection upon their teaching showed a deep understanding and awareness of the principle of the student-centred learning approach. The teachers have shifted their behaviour from the "chalk and talk" technique, which is considered a conventional teaching approach, into enjoyable classroom activities by engaging an interactive and collaborative model of learning. As such, by the limited number of teachers referred to in this study, the communicative approach introduced by ELTIS has been effectively brought into practice.

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Dr Gavin Austin is a lecturer in applied linguistics at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia. His research is in second language acquisition. He has expertise in linguistic theory, discourse analysis, and Asian languages and linguistics. Gavin has extensive experience as an English language instructor working in Japan and Australia.

Dr Shirley O'Neill is Professor of Language and Literacies Education at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia. Her interests are in TESOL, teacher metacognition, dialogic pedagogy and in formative assessment in pre-service education with extensive experience in assessment and teacher professional development in schools in Australia and the UK, and in school review, curriculum and policy development.

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