
TEACHING APPROACHES OF EXPERIENCED ENGLISH EDUCATORS IN RURAL HIGH SCHOOLS OF BALI

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Abstract

This qualitative study examines the teaching approaches utilized by experienced English educators in high schools located in rural areas of Bali, with a specific emphasis on socio-cultural influences. Conducted between August and November 2021, the research was conducted within a senior high school in a rural Balinese setting. The study addresses instructional challenges stemming from the significant impact of the well-known folk song “Eda Ngaden Awak Bise” on the local Balinese community, which contributes to a prevailing low-profile demeanor. This cultural backdrop poses pedagogical hurdles, as students often exhibit limited engagement during class discussions and oral assessments. The research engages with five proficient English instructors in Bali, employing qualitative research methods. Direct classroom observations complement in-depth interviews with educators to assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of chosen teaching methodologies. The findings reveal various approaches, including the lecture-plus model, grammar translation method, collaborative techniques, narrative enactment, and gamification. Traditional and contemporary methods are observed and adapted to align with individual classroom dynamics and student needs, often influenced by the subject matter. In conclusion, this study underscores that the fusion of conventional and innovative pedagogies characterizes the instructional techniques employed by these educators.

Keywords

Teaching Approaches, Experienced Educators, Socio-Cultural Influence.



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PENDAHULUAN

Effective English education extends beyond the mastery of grammar, vocabulary, and language structures; it also involves developing learners' communicative competence and creating meaningful learning environments in which language is used within particular social and cultural contexts. Language is fundamentally a social practice shaped by interaction, identity, cultural values, and learners' experiences (Kramsch, 2014); (Norton, 2013). Consequently, effective English instruction requires learning environments that provide opportunities for learners to interact, negotiate meaning, and use language meaningfully rather than merely memorize linguistic forms (Ellis, 2015); (Richards, 2017). This perspective is consistent with sociocultural theory, which conceptualizes learning as a process mediated by social interaction, language, cultural artifacts, and assistance from more knowledgeable individuals (L. S. Vygotsky, 1978); (Xi & Lantolf, 2021). Within this perspective, teachers play an important role as learning mediators who provide scaffolding and facilitate learners' movement from activities that require assistance toward more independent performance (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). The concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) further emphasizes that learners' development can be optimized when instructional support corresponds to their abilities and learning needs (L. S. (Lev S. V. Vygotsky, 1978); (van Compernelle & Williams, 2013). Therefore, English teaching approaches need to consider not only linguistic objectives but also learners' characteristics, social environments, cultural backgrounds, and classroom interaction patterns (Johnson, 2009); (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

The selection and implementation of teaching approaches are also closely associated with teachers' professional experience. Experienced teachers generally develop practical knowledge through repeated encounters with diverse classroom situations, learner characteristics, instructional materials, and pedagogical challenges (Borg, 2006); (Tsui, 2003)V. Such experience enables teachers to recognize classroom patterns, make context-sensitive pedagogical decisions, and modify instructional strategies according to learners' needs (Farrell, 2015); (Farrell, 2019). Rather than rigidly applying a single teaching method, experienced language teachers may employ an eclectic combination of approaches depending on instructional objectives, classroom conditions, learner characteristics, and available resources (Bimrose et al., 2007); (Richards & Rodgers, 2014)V. This adaptability is particularly important in English language education because no single method can adequately address the diverse linguistic, cognitive, social, and cultural needs of all learners (Mackey et al., 2004). The effectiveness of a teaching approach, therefore, depends not only on the

method itself but also on how teachers interpret and adapt it within particular educational settings.

These issues become more complex in rural high schools, where English learners may have fewer opportunities to encounter and use English outside the classroom. Differences in access to learning resources, exposure to English, opportunities for authentic communication, and learners' perceptions of the relevance of English can influence the quality of language learning experiences (Butler, 2011); (Lamb, 2012). In Indonesia, these conditions are further shaped by considerable social and cultural diversity, meaning that approaches developed in one educational context cannot necessarily be transferred directly to another without contextual adaptation (Lie, 2007); (Kirkpatrick, 2010). The Indonesian context, therefore, requires English teachers to negotiate between global expectations of English language education and local cultural values. This negotiation is particularly relevant in Bali, where local cultural practices and values remain strongly embedded in everyday social life while English has considerable practical significance because of the island's international tourism and intercultural interactions. The coexistence of local cultural traditions and the global function of English creates a distinctive pedagogical environment in which teachers must respond simultaneously to curricular expectations, communicative demands, and culturally shaped patterns of learner participation.

One culturally relevant issue concerns value associated with humility and restrained self-presentation. Such values can be illustrated through the Balinese folk song *Pupuh Ginada*, particularly the well-known expression "Eda ngaden awak bisa, depang anak ngadanin," which conveys the idea that individuals should not regard themselves as superior or overly capable and should allow others to recognize their abilities. Although this cultural expression should not automatically be interpreted as a direct cause of students' classroom behavior, its underlying values provide an important cultural lens for examining participation, confidence, and willingness to express oneself in English learning. English language instruction, particularly communicative approaches, often requires students to speak publicly, express opinions, ask questions, participate in discussions, perform dialogues, and demonstrate their abilities in front of peers. Consequently, a potentially important pedagogical question emerges: how do experienced teachers respond when local expectations of humility and restrained self-expression intersect with classroom practices that require active verbal participation? From a sociocultural perspective, such classroom behavior needs to be understood not simply as an individual learner characteristic but as part of the broader social and cultural environment in which learning occurs (Kramsch, 2014); (Lantolf et al., 2015).

Previous studies have provided important foundations for understanding these issues. Kramsch emphasizes that language learning is inseparable from culture because language carries meanings, identities, values, and culturally situated ways of understanding the world (Kramsch, 2014). Lamb, in the Indonesian context, demonstrates that learners' English learning experiences and motivation are influenced by their social environment, access to English, and perceptions of the language's relevance to their lives (Harrison et al., 2019). Butler (2011) further demonstrates that English language teaching in Asian contexts is influenced by local conditions, including teacher competence, educational resources, policy, and learner characteristics (Butler, 2011). These findings suggest that English pedagogy cannot be separated from the context in which it is implemented. From the perspective of teacher development, Borg (2006) argues that teachers' classroom practices are closely related to their knowledge, beliefs, experiences, and interpretations of teaching situations (Borg, 2003). Similarly, Farrell (2015) demonstrates that experienced language teachers develop professional competence through reflection on classroom practices and through encounters with diverse pedagogical problems (Skene et al., 2022). Tsui (2003) also shows that experienced teachers possess a greater capacity to identify classroom patterns and make flexible instructional decisions (Tsui, 2003). Meanwhile, Lantolf et al. (2015) and van Compernelle and Williams (2013) emphasize that language development is mediated through social interaction, reinforcing the importance of examining classroom practices as socially and culturally situated processes. Richards and Rodgers (2014) further explain that language teaching has developed through diverse approaches, including Grammar Translation, communicative approaches, task-based learning, and other interaction-oriented pedagogies, whose implementation depends substantially on the instructional context.

Despite these contributions, an important research gap remains. Existing studies have extensively examined English teaching methods, learner motivation, teacher beliefs, teacher experience, and the influence of culture on language learning, but these dimensions are often investigated separately. Less attention has been given to how experienced English teachers in rural Balinese high schools actually negotiate local sociocultural values when selecting and adapting instructional approaches. In particular, there remains limited empirical understanding of how teachers respond to culturally shaped patterns of humility and restrained self-expression while simultaneously encouraging communicative competence, active participation, and confidence in English. The gap is therefore not simply a lack of studies identifying which teaching methods teachers employ, but a lack of detailed understanding of why and how experienced teachers adapt

those approaches in response to the sociocultural realities of their classrooms. The novelty of the present study lies in positioning teachers' pedagogical practices as forms of sociocultural adaptation rather than merely categorizing them according to conventional methodological labels. The study specifically examines how experienced teachers select, combine, and modify approaches such as lecture-based instruction, Grammar Translation, collaborative learning, storytelling and role play, and gamification according to learners' characteristics, classroom dynamics, instructional objectives, and local cultural considerations. The inclusion of Pupuh Ginada as a culturally situated lens further provides a distinctive perspective for understanding the interaction between Balinese cultural values and contemporary English language pedagogy.

Accordingly, this qualitative study aims to explore the teaching approaches employed by experienced English educators in rural high schools of Bali and to examine how sociocultural factors influence the selection and implementation of those approaches. Specifically, the study seeks to identify the instructional approaches employed by experienced English teachers, describe the considerations underlying their selection and adaptation of teaching strategies, and analyze how Balinese sociocultural values, including values represented through Pupuh Ginada, are negotiated within English language teaching practices. By addressing these objectives, the study is expected to contribute theoretically to sociocultural perspectives on language pedagogy and practically to the development of culturally responsive English teaching practices in rural and culturally diverse educational contexts.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design using a multi-case study approach to explore the teaching approaches employed by five experienced English educators in a rural high school in Bali, Indonesia. The study was conducted in a deliberately selected rural high school because of its relevance to the investigation of the relationship between English language pedagogy, teacher experience, rural educational conditions, and Balinese sociocultural values. The data consisted of qualitative information concerning teachers' instructional practices, pedagogical considerations, classroom interactions, and perceptions of students' sociocultural characteristics, while the primary data sources were five experienced English teachers selected through purposive sampling based on their teaching experience and direct involvement in English instruction at the research site. Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, non-participant

classroom observations, and documentation. The interviews explored teachers' teaching experiences, instructional approaches, reasons for selecting particular methods, strategies for encouraging student participation, and perceptions of sociocultural factors affecting English learning, while classroom observations were conducted to examine the actual implementation of the reported teaching practices, including teacher-student interaction, classroom activities, scaffolding, student participation, and classroom management. Relevant teaching documents and learning materials were also examined to complement the interview and observation data. The data were analyzed through a systematic qualitative process involving data organization, repeated reading, initial coding, categorization, thematic identification, and interpretation. Within-case analysis was first conducted to describe each teacher's instructional practices, followed by cross-case analysis to identify similarities, differences, and distinctive patterns among the five participants (Yin, 2018). The emerging themes were interpreted through a sociocultural perspective, particularly concepts of mediation, scaffolding, social interaction, and the influence of cultural context on classroom participation (Vygotsky, 1978; Lantolf et al., 2015). Data credibility was strengthened through triangulation by comparing interview findings, classroom observations, and documentation, while ethical procedures included informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the use of participant codes to protect identities.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The results showed that the five teachers used different learning approaches in English teaching. Teacher A used innovative teaching methods, including interactive activities and games, to help students understand vocabulary and increase engagement in learning. Teacher B used Discovery Learning and Problem-Based Learning by providing students with the opportunity to search for information through reference books, textbooks, the internet, and other learning resources. Teacher C used the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) and the Audio-Lingual Method, mainly to teach sentence structure, vocabulary, and communication. Teacher D used question and answer methods, group assignments, discussions, and collaborative learning. Meanwhile, Teacher E used lectures combined with discussions, questions and answers, drilling, demonstrations, problem-solving, simulations, and assignments, with lectures as the most frequently used methods. The findings showed the variation in learning approaches used by the five teachers according to the

observed learning practices and the information obtained through interviews.

Table 1. Teaching Approaches Employed by the Five Teachers

No	Teacher	Teaching Approach/Method	Observed or Reported Instructional Activities
1	Teacher A	Innovative teaching	Interactive activities, games, vocabulary activities
2	Teacher B	Discovery Learning; Problem-Based Learning	Information searching, exploration of learning sources, speaking activities
3	Teacher C	Grammar Translation Method; Audio Lingual Method	Translation, sentence-structure activities, audio-based practice
4	Teacher D	Question and Answer; Group Assignment; Discussion; Collaborative Learning	Question-and-answer sessions, group work, discussion, peer collaboration
5	Teacher E	Lecture; Discussion; Question and Answer; Drilling; Demonstration; Problem-Solving; Simulation	Lectures, practice, discussions, assignments, demonstrations, simulations, and online learning activities

Note: Table 1 presents the teaching approaches and classroom activities identified from the interview and observation data; interpretations of the pedagogical significance of these approaches are presented in the Discussion section.

The data also show differences in the specific purposes associated with each teacher's instructional practice. Teacher A reported using innovative activities because students had relatively low English proficiency and required vocabulary development before moving to more specific language components. Teacher B emphasized student activity and independent information seeking. Teacher C combined GTM and the Audio-Lingual Method to address sentence structure and communication. Teacher D emphasized interaction through question-and-answer activities, group assignments, and discussions. Teacher E combined lectures with subsequent practice and adapted some activities to online learning through instructional videos, Google Classroom, and group assignments.

Table 2. Data Matrix of Teachers' Instructional Practices

No	Teacher	Main instructional practice	Supporting activity/context
1	Teacher A	Innovative teaching	Games and vocabulary development
2	Teacher B	Discovery/Problem-Based Learning	Searching for information from books, textbooks, the internet, and other sources
3	Teacher C	GTM and Audio-Lingual Method	English-Indonesian translation and sentence-structure practice
4	Teacher D	Collaborative learning	Q&A, group assignments, and discussions
5	Teacher E	Lecture-plus	Lecture followed by practice, assignments, discussion, and online learning

Note : Table 2 summarizes the empirical data for each teacher without interpreting the relationship between the findings and existing theories or previous studies.

Discussion

The findings indicate that experienced English teachers in the rural Balinese high school did not rely on a single standardized teaching method. Instead, the five teachers employed different combinations of instructional practices, ranging from innovative activities and Discovery Learning to Grammar Translation, Audio Lingual, collaborative learning, and lecture-plus approaches. This variation indicates that teaching practice is shaped by the interaction between teachers, learners, instructional objectives, and classroom conditions. Teacher A, for example, used games and interactive activities in response to students' relatively low English proficiency, while Teacher B encouraged students to search for information independently through Discovery Learning and Problem-Based Learning. Teacher C combined GTM and the Audio-Lingual Method to address both linguistic structure and oral practice, whereas Teacher D prioritized interaction through collaborative activities. Teacher E relied more heavily on lectures but combined them with practice, discussion, assignments, and other techniques. These findings suggest that experienced teachers exercise pedagogical flexibility rather than mechanically applying one method.

From a sociocultural perspective, this flexibility can be understood through the concept of learning as a socially mediated process. Vygotsky (1978) argues that learning develops through interaction with others and through forms of assistance that enable learners to perform tasks that they may not yet be able to accomplish independently. The practices of Teacher A and Teacher D particularly illustrate this principle because games, discussions, group assignments, and collaborative activities create opportunities for learners to interact with teachers and peers. Such practices can function as forms of mediation and scaffolding in which learners receive support while developing their linguistic abilities. Lantolf et al. (2015) similarly argue that language development

is mediated through social interaction and culturally organized activities. Therefore, the findings affirm the sociocultural view that English learning is not merely an individual process of acquiring linguistic structures but also a socially situated process.

Teacher A's use of innovative activities and games also demonstrates the importance of adapting pedagogy to learners' existing proficiency. The teacher explicitly identified students' limited English proficiency as a reason for emphasizing vocabulary and interactive activities. This finding is consistent with the argument of Richards and Rodgers (2014) that teaching approaches need to be considered in relation to learners, instructional objectives, and classroom conditions rather than treated as universally applicable procedures. It also supports Lamb's (2012) finding that English learning in Indonesia is influenced by learners' local learning environments and their opportunities to engage with English. In this respect, Teacher A's practice can be interpreted as an adaptive response to a particular learner profile rather than simply an implementation of an "innovative method." The finding, therefore, provides an affirmation of previous research emphasizing contextualized and learner-responsive English pedagogy.

Teacher B's use of Discovery Learning and Problem-Based Learning demonstrates another form of pedagogical adaptation, particularly through opportunities for learners to seek information independently and use that information in English communication. This practice reflects the constructivist and sociocultural assumption that learners actively construct knowledge through engagement with their environment and through interaction with learning resources and other individuals. The finding is also consistent with Johnson's (2009) view that language teachers construct pedagogical knowledge through engagement with particular social and institutional contexts. However, the finding extends this perspective by demonstrating that experienced teachers in rural contexts may use information-search activities not merely to promote content knowledge but also to create opportunities for English communication.

Teacher C's combination of Grammar Translation and Audio Lingual approaches presents an interesting finding because these methods are frequently associated with more traditional forms of language instruction, whereas contemporary English pedagogy often emphasizes communicative and learner-centered approaches. Nevertheless, Teacher C did not employ GTM exclusively; the teacher combined translation and structural instruction with audio-based practice. This finding suggests that traditional and contemporary pedagogical practices can coexist within the same classroom. Rather than confirming the assumption that communicative teaching necessarily requires

abandoning traditional approaches, the finding provides a partial antithesis to a rigid method-based distinction. Richards and Rodgers (2014) emphasize the historical differences among language teaching methods, but the present finding demonstrates that experienced teachers may combine elements of different approaches pragmatically according to instructional needs. The practice also corresponds with Borg's (2006) argument that teachers' classroom practices are influenced by their accumulated knowledge, beliefs, and experiences.

Teacher D's emphasis on question-and-answer activities, group assignments, discussions, and collaboration provides the clearest evidence of interaction-oriented pedagogy among the five cases. The teacher's statement that students help one another illustrates the importance assigned to peer interaction within the learning process. This finding strongly supports Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural perspective and Lantolf et al.'s (2015) argument concerning the mediating role of social interaction in language development. It also aligns with van Compernelle and Williams (2013), who emphasize the relationship between interaction and language development. However, the finding is particularly important in the rural context because collaborative activities can provide opportunities for English interaction even when learners have limited opportunities to use English outside the classroom. Thus, Teacher D's practice can be viewed as an affirmation of interaction-based approaches while simultaneously highlighting their contextual value in rural English education.

Teacher E's lecture-plus approach provides a contrasting case. Although the lecture was the dominant method, it was followed by practice, discussion, assignments, demonstrations, problem-solving, and simulations. In the online learning context, the teacher also adapted lectures into instructional videos and used Google Classroom for assignments and group activities. This finding demonstrates that a teacher-centered technique does not necessarily exclude opportunities for active learning. Instead, lecture functions as an initial form of knowledge transmission that is subsequently complemented by practice and interaction. This finding supports the position of Mackey et al. (2004) that no single method is sufficient for teaching all aspects of a language. It also supports Farrell's (2015) argument that experienced teachers develop the capacity to adapt instructional practices in response to classroom circumstances. More importantly, Teacher E's case indicates that pedagogical adaptability can emerge not only from learner characteristics but also from changes in the learning environment and instructional technology.

Taken together, the five cases demonstrate that teaching experience is associated with pedagogical adaptability, although the data do not justify a causal claim that experience alone produces particular teaching approaches. The teachers' practices appear to be shaped by multiple factors, including students' English proficiency, learning objectives, classroom interaction, available resources, instructional conditions, and technological circumstances. This interpretation is consistent with Borg (2006), Tsui (2003), and Farrell (2015), who emphasize the role of teachers' accumulated professional knowledge in classroom decision-making. The present findings, therefore, strengthen previous research by showing how pedagogical flexibility is manifested through concrete combinations of teaching approaches in a rural Balinese context.

From the sociocultural perspective that underpins this study, the diversity of teaching approaches can also be understood as teachers' negotiation with the local learning environment. The findings suggest that teachers do not simply transfer externally established English teaching methods into the classroom; rather, they modify instructional practices according to the students and circumstances they encounter. This is particularly relevant to the cultural context of Bali, where patterns of interaction and self-expression may be influenced by local cultural values. However, the present data should be interpreted cautiously: the findings demonstrate teachers' awareness of learner characteristics and classroom participation, but they do not yet provide sufficient empirical evidence to establish a direct causal relationship between the values represented by Pupuh Ginada and students' willingness to participate in English. Therefore, the cultural dimension should be presented as a contextual lens through which pedagogical practices are interpreted rather than as a predetermined explanation of student behavior.

Overall, the findings affirm the central proposition of sociocultural theory that language teaching is embedded in social interaction and contextual conditions, while also challenging a rigid classification of teaching methods into traditional and contemporary categories. The five experienced teachers demonstrate that effective classroom practice may involve combining different approaches according to learners' needs and situational demands. The contribution of this study, therefore, lies not simply in identifying five different teaching methods but in demonstrating how experienced teachers in a rural Balinese setting exercise pedagogical choice and adaptation within a particular sociocultural environment.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that experienced English educators in rural high schools in Bali employ diverse and adaptive teaching approaches rather than relying on a single instructional method. Across the five cases, the teachers employed innovative teaching activities, Discovery Learning, Problem-Based Learning, Grammar Translation Method, Audio Lingual Method, question-and-answer activities, group assignments, discussions, collaborative learning, lecture-plus, drilling, demonstrations, problem-solving, and simulations. The cross-case analysis demonstrates that the selection and combination of these approaches were closely related to students' English proficiency, learning objectives, classroom conditions, available learning resources, and changing instructional environments. Interactive and collaborative approaches provided opportunities for student participation and peer interaction, while traditional approaches, such as Grammar.

Translation and lecture remained relevant for presenting language structures and foundational knowledge when appropriately combined with subsequent practice or interaction. The findings, therefore, affirm the sociocultural perspective that English teaching is shaped by social interaction, mediation, and contextual conditions. At the same time, the findings challenge a rigid distinction between traditional and contemporary teaching methods, demonstrating that experienced teachers may combine different pedagogical practices pragmatically according to the needs of their classrooms. In the Balinese rural context, teachers' pedagogical adaptability represents an important mechanism for negotiating the demands of English language learning with local classroom characteristics.

However, the findings do not establish a direct causal relationship between Balinese cultural values, including those represented through *Pupuh Ginada*, and students' reluctance to participate; rather, these values provide a sociocultural context that should be considered when interpreting classroom interaction and teacher decision-making. Future research is recommended to involve a larger number of schools and teachers across different rural areas of Bali and to investigate students' perspectives more explicitly. Further studies could also employ longitudinal or mixed-method designs to examine whether particular culturally responsive teaching approaches produce sustained changes in students' English participation, communicative confidence, and language development. Such research would provide a broader basis for developing context-sensitive English teaching

practices that integrate pedagogical effectiveness with the sociocultural characteristics of rural Balinese education.

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