REIMAGINING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING: METHODS AND TECHNIQUES FOR NON-NATIVE LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

The advancement of technology and the increasing internationalization of business and communication necessitate effective English communication skills, particularly in regions where English is not the primary language. This ethnographic research explores the pedagogical techniques employed by English as a Second Language (ESL) educators in settings where English is not the native language. The study employs a micro-ethnographic approach, including video observations and structured interviews with language teachers, to identify effective teaching methods and resources. Through thematic analysis of interview responses, the findings reveal that the core element of these strategies entails the strategic use of multimedia tools, customized to meet the varying learning styles and preferences of students. The study also identifies the use of rhetorical questions and the establishment of a connection between lessons, along with creating a welcoming atmosphere, as methods to encourage critical thinking and active participation among learners. Lastly, teachers utilize instructional aids like graphic organizers and advance organizers to aid comprehension of fundamental concepts and their practical applications.

Keywords: *language teaching, communication skills, pedagogical techniques, micro-ethnography, thematic analysis*

INTRODUCTION

Technological advancement, internationalization, and the development of information and communication technology demand proficient English communication skills, especially in regions where English is not the primary language. Traditional methods of teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) have often faced challenges in effectively addressing the diverse needs of non-native learners. Consequently, educators are continually seeking innovative approaches to enhance the learning experience and outcomes for these students. This study aims to explore and document the pedagogical techniques that are being effectively employed by ESL faculty in such contexts.

As the Philippines prepares and empowers its workforce for overseas employment, the education system must adapt to these global requirements most especially in providing language education particularly in English as one of the dominant languages in business, economics, and industries.

As a result, language educators must continuously enhance their teaching effectiveness by exploring various methods and strategies to actively engage students to learning activities. This approach aims not only to help students gain knowledge of the language but, more importantly, to develop their practical use of English.

This ethnographic research focuses on the teaching methods of four language educators at Isabela State University, providing a comprehensive analysis of their classroom interactions through video recordings. By examining these interactions in detail, the study aims to identify key strategies and resources that contribute to effective teaching and foster student engagement. The research employs thematic analysis of structured interview responses to uncover these strategies.

Through this investigation, the study aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on ESL teaching methodologies, offering insights that can improve instructional practices for non-native English learners.

Research Questions

1. What key methods and techniques do language educators use to ensure effective teaching?
2. What instructional decisions and actions English teachers take to enhance student engagement?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design
This study adopts the micro-ethnographic method in defining the pedagogical techniques employed by the four selected language educators at a university in the Philippines. After conducting video observations of English classes, a series of video analysis followed by interviews was conducted to capture the actual techniques and strategies used by English teachers in conducting their classes and to determine the reason behind their instructional decisions and actions. Thematic approach is applied in analyzing the transcribed results of interviews.

Instrumentation
The interview guide which is used to gather pertinent data for this study consist of two parts. The first part gathers demographic data from the teacher respondents and the second part concerns about their instructional decisions and actions. Language experts likewise reviewed the questionnaire to ensure its validity vis-à-vis the objectives of this study.

RESULTS

Theme 1 Timely use of digital and non-digital tools
The participants of this study highlight the significance of visual aids particularly in online teaching environments. As shown in Table 1, Teacher B stressed visual aids serve not only to capture students' interest but also to bridge the gap between abstract concepts and tangible understanding. It is pointed out that visual aids prevent students from having to rely solely on their imagination, which can be particularly challenging in an online setting where the teacher's physical presence and gestures are limited. By providing concrete

visuals, teachers can ensure that students have a clear and accurate understanding of the lesson content (Barseghyan, 2023; Cuenca et al., 2024; Mahmood, 2024).

Another participant emphasized the importance of providing additional learning resources, such as handouts or modules, to students. The participant's insight underscores how these materials can encourage students to engage with the lesson content more thoroughly. This aligns with educational theories that advocate for supplementary materials as tools for reinforcing (Ayado & Berame, 2022) and extending learning.

Supplementary materials provide students with resources that they can refer to outside of class, which can enhance their understanding and retention (Miremba, 2024) of the material. They can offer more detailed explanations, examples, and exercises that may not be covered fully during class time. This can be particularly beneficial in learning environments where students might need additional support to grasp complex concepts.

Moreover, the availability of handouts and modules can foster a habit of self-directed learning among students. When students are given resources to explore the lesson content further on their own, they are more likely to take initiative in their learning process. This can lead to better academic outcomes and a deeper understanding of the subject matter (Zhao, et al., 2024; Hue, et al. 2024).

Actual Statement	Codes	Themes
Especially during online classes, for me it is very important that we have our visual aids because it doesn't only help to make the students more interested in the lesson but also it is an aid during the discussion where the students can see what you are discussing and they will have concrete idea on what you are talking about rather than just listening wherein the idea they are just trying to imagine it. (Teacher B)	Visual aids	Timely use of digital and non-digital tools
It is also important to provide materials like handouts or module so that students will be encouraged to further read about the lesson. (Teacher D)	Handouts	
Aside from presentation slides I also utilize some video presentation from YouTube wherein most especially it is really supplemental on the topics that we have. Aside from that is sometimes audio record if they have to listen to something which is related to our lesson. (Teacher C)	Video presentation	

Theme 2 Engaging Students Through Strategic Questioning

Teacher D's statement underscores the essential role that questioning plays in effective teaching. By asking meaningful questions, teachers can actively involve students in the learning process, stimulating their interest and encouraging them to draw upon their prior knowledge. This technique is supported by the Socratic method, which uses questioning to foster critical thinking and deeper understanding (Rasyid, et al., 2023; Ranbir, 2024; Paul & Elder, 2006).

Strategic questioning promotes active learning by encouraging students to participate in discussions (Pang, et al., 2024), rather than passively receiving information. When students are asked to think about and respond to questions, they are more likely to engage with the material and develop a deeper understanding of the content.

Questioning also helps to assess students' prior knowledge and misconceptions. By eliciting responses from students, teachers can gauge their understanding (Niza, 2024) and identify areas where further clarification or additional instruction may be needed. This formative assessment allows teachers to tailor their instruction to better meet the needs of their students.

Furthermore, questioning can stimulate interest and motivation. When students are prompted to think critically and share their thoughts, they become more invested in the learning process. This engagement can lead to increased curiosity (Lintangsari, et al., 2022) and a desire to explore the topic further, fostering a more dynamic and interactive learning environment (Niza, 2024; Abudi & Gallardo, 2024).

On one hand, the insight of Teacher C underscores a fundamental aspect of teaching: the role of student questions as a marker of engagement and comprehension. When students ask questions, it often indicates that they are actively participating in the lesson and are engaged with the material. Addressing these questions promptly and effectively is necessary to maintain a productive learning environment and ensure that all students have a clear understanding of the content.

Similarly, responding to student questions provides immediate feedback to both the teacher and the student. For the teacher, students' questions can reveal areas where further explanation is needed, allowing for real-time adjustments to the lesson. For students, receiving answers to their questions helps clarify their understanding and correct any misconceptions they may have.

Actual Statement	Codes	Themes
I believe the art of questioning is being demonstrated here. Asking significant questions during class discussion is very important because it's a way	Art of questioning	Involve students through question generation and effective questioning

of involving students in the discussion and arousing their interest as they think and share about their background knowledge regarding the topic. (Teacher D)		
I sometimes ask rhetorical questions not only to gauge the knowledge of students but also to provide an opportunity for them to practice their ability to reason out and defend their perspective. (Teacher A)	Rhetorical questions	
kasi po a kapag nagtatanong po yung estudyante ibig sabihin ahm nakikinig po siya kung baga parang nakikita po niya sa lesson kung baga kung may mali parang ganun po. So importante po na i ano natin kapag nagtanong po yung mga estudyante sagutin po natin yung tanong. (When a student asks a question, it means they are listening and understanding the lesson, and they might notice if something is wrong. So, it's important that we answer the students' questions when they ask.) (Teacher C)	Student's question	

Theme 3 Establishing a Connection between Lessons and Creating a Welcoming Atmosphere

In another scenario, a language teacher described her approach to starting classes. She noted, "*I usually begin my class by greeting my students then after greeting them sometimes I'll try to recall the previous topics and then relate the lessons that they learned to the topic that we are about to discuss.*" This emphasizes the importance of establishing a welcoming atmosphere and connecting past learning to new content.

The teacher's approach to beginning their classes reflects best practices in classroom management and instructional design. Starting with a warm greeting helps create a positive

and engaging learning environment, which can enhance student motivation and willingness to participate (Cornelius-White, 2007).

Recapping previous topics before introducing new content is likewise an effective strategy for reinforcing learning and making connections between concepts. This technique, known as "scaffolding," helps students build upon their existing knowledge and see the relevance of what they have previously learned to the current lesson (Wood, et al., 1976). By relating past lessons to the new topic, teachers can facilitate better retention and understanding, as students are able to integrate new information into their existing cognitive frameworks.

Additionally, this approach can help activate prior knowledge, making it easier for students to engage with and comprehend new material. When students can link new content to what they already know, they are more likely to find the lesson meaningful and relevant, which can enhance their overall learning experience.

Theme 4 Use of Graphic Organizers and Advance Organizers in Teaching

The teacher's use of graphic organizers and advance organizers reflects a strategic approach to reinforcing and applying key concepts. Graphic organizers are effective tools for visualizing relationships between concepts and terms, which can aid in memory retention and comprehension (Gallardo & Leon, 2024; Mireshghi et al., 2024). By stressing important keywords and concepts, these tools help students structure and organize their understanding of the lesson material.

Actual Statement	Codes	Themes
I think the competence that is demonstrated here is the ability to direct students to the important concepts relevant to the topic being discussed. This means that I was emphasizing the key words for the topic on hand and I did it by means of presenting a graphic organizer. That way, students can better remember the important concepts or terms in the lesson.	Important concepts	Use of Graphic Organizers and Advance Organizers in Teaching
I was referring to the activity wherein the students have to select a book chapter and prepare an advance organizer about it. They had	Advance organizer	

to do such an activity in order to apply what we discussed during our class. In addition, accomplishing such activity may require students to read further about the lesson so that they could select the most appropriate type of organizer they will make.		

The activity involving the creation of advance organizers further emphasizes the application of learned concepts. This task requires students to engage with the material more deeply, as they must select an appropriate type of organizer and relate it to the content of a book chapter. Such activities not only reinforce students' understanding of the lesson but also encourage them to engage in additional reading and research. This aligns with constructivist approaches to learning, which advocate for active participation and application of knowledge (Jeon et al., 2023; Piaget, 1976).

Incorporating graphic organizers and advance organizers into teaching strategies supports various learning styles and can enhance student engagement. These tools provide a visual representation of information that can help students make connections and retain important concepts. Additionally, by involving students in the creation of their own organizers, teachers promote critical thinking and self-directed learning (Lee, 2022; Uus, et al., 2022).

CONCLUSIONS

This study emphasizes the importance of both digital and non-digital tools in teaching. Visual aids are crucial, especially in online settings, as they help bridge the gap between abstract concepts and tangible understanding, preventing reliance solely on imagination. Supplementary materials like handouts and modules further support learning by offering additional resources for students to explore independently, enhancing their comprehension and retention.

Strategic questioning is emphasized as a key teaching technique, engaging students actively and encouraging critical thinking. It helps assess their understanding and address misconceptions, with increased importance in online settings where feedback may be less immediate.

Beginning classes with greetings and reviewing previous content establishes a welcoming atmosphere and connects past learning to new material, aiding in retention and comprehension.

Finally, the use of graphic and advance organizers helps students visualize and organize key concepts, promoting deeper engagement with the material and encouraging self-directed learning.

In general, these strategies collectively enhance student engagement and understanding, contributing to improved academic outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions drawn, several recommendations can be made to enhance teaching effectiveness.

Firstly, educators should integrate a variety of visual aids and supplementary materials into their teaching practices. In online environments, where physical presence is limited, visual aids such as diagrams, slides, and illustrations are essential for clarifying abstract concepts and making lessons more engaging. Teachers should also provide handouts and modules to offer students additional resources for independent study, which can reinforce and extend their learning beyond the classroom.

Incorporating strategic questioning techniques is also recommended to foster active learning and critical thinking. Teachers should use meaningful questions to engage students, assess their understanding, and address any misconceptions. Creating opportunities for students to ask questions and receive timely feedback is crucial, especially in online settings where interaction may be less frequent.

Additionally, beginning each class with a warm greeting and a review of previous topics can help establish a positive learning environment and facilitate connections between past and current content. This approach not only enhances student motivation but also aids in reinforcing and integrating new information.

Finally, the use of graphic and advance organizers should be encouraged as effective tools for organizing and visualizing key concepts. These tools help students better structure their understanding and engage more deeply with the material. Teachers should incorporate activities that involve creating these organizers to promote active participation and self-directed learning.

By implementing these recommendations, educators can create a more dynamic and supportive learning environment that enhances student engagement, comprehension, and overall academic performance.

Compliance with Ethical Standards
The author affirms that strict adherence to research ethics was maintained throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, their well-being was safeguarded, and their identities remained anonymous. The author also confirms that explicit permission to identify institution by name was granted, in compliance with data

privacy regulations. The study contains no substantial plagiarism, and no conflict of interest affected its conduct. Additionally, the respondents' statements were validated, and an expert reviewed the interpretations to ensure objective and accurate analysis of the findings for the purposes of this research.

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