



The Teacher's Emotional Management in Indonesian EFL Context

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Abstract

English in-service teachers tend to encounter various challenges such as resources of teaching-learning (For example, book, additional support materials), learners' discipline, classroom management. Hence, English in-service teachers are required to have the ability in managing their emotions. However, inadequate attention has been devoted to describing teachers' emotional management during teaching in the classroom. To fill this void, this study aimed at describing how the teacher manages her emotions during English language teaching in the classroom. One teacher of Vocational High school in Tasikmalaya participated as a research participant. The finding indicated that (1) Performing Entertaining activities as a strategy of mitigating saturated teaching routine, (2) Self-relaxing and avoiding harsh words during anger, (3) Strategies to reduce the annoyance. The fact is that the teacher has her way of managing their emotion during teaching in the classroom to continue to do her job professionally.

INTRODUCTION

Recent studies have revealed that emotions play a key role in English language teaching. Emotions influence how teachers act in a certain situation. It has been identified (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Schutz, Cross, Hong & Osbon, 2007; (Syafrizal, Yuniarti, & Sofyana, 2020), that well-understood teachers' emotions and emotional processes can improve their teaching practices and help to understand and avoid the drop-out and burnout of teachers (Hong 2010; Schutz, Quijada, Vries & Lynde, 2010). As a result, empirical research and theoretical approaches are growing to the emotional, professional identities, and educational changes (van Veen & Lasky, 2005; Raji, 2020). Therefore, understanding how teachers manage emotions remains pivotal due to its influences on teachers' teaching performances (Rianti, Hidayati, Pertamina, Andriani, & Abdullah, 2020).

Emotional management has great impacts to reach successful learning goals, such as improving teaching effectiveness, creating activities, building a conducive atmosphere, and motivating the learners to engage in learning activities (Andriani & Abdullah, 2017; Makhawathana, Mudzielwana & Mulovhedzi, 2017). However, poor emotional management will potentially give a bad impact on the students, such as ineffective learning practices, sad and uncomfortable feelings, uselessness perception, fear, and frustration (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Yundayani, Abdullah, Tandiana, & Sutrisno, 2021). Although positive emotions have a good effect on teaching-learning, negative experiences may occur during teaching practices.

Dealing with the contributions of positive emotions to maintain students' learning motivation and mitigating teachers' saturated teaching routine, enjoyable learning, and self-motivating learning practices are more successful than boring and teacher-directed learning activities. (Elton-Chalcraft and Mills, 2015; Tews, Jackson, Ramsay, and Michel, 2015; Rosmala, Hidayati & Abdullah, 2021). Additionally, the context of adult learning relies on positive learning outcomes, such as students' engagement and job performance (Francis & Kentel, 2008; Fine & Corte, 2017; Tews, Michel & Noe, 2017). As a result, keeping positive feelings enable students to have "a fluid state" (Prouty, 2002) which lead them to enhance their learning performances, mitigate their stress, increase their alertness and foster their engagement (Okada & Sheehy, 2020; Amalia, Abdullah & Fatimah, 2021).

Practically, English in-service teachers tend to encounter various challenges during a teaching in the classrooms, particularly with concerning emotional management such as resources of teaching-learning (e.g. book, additional support materials), learners' discipline, classroom management, supervision and support and observation (Foncha, Abongdia & Adu, 2015; Abdullah & Lulita, 2018). Hence, English in-service teachers are required to have the ability in managing their emotions in the classroom.

Although a plethora of studies has emphasized emotional management in the teaching profession (Jenkins & Conley, 2007); Teacher Emotional Management in the Classroom (Chang, 2009); Teachers' emotional Intelligence (Dewaele, Gkonou & Mercer, 2018), inadequate attention has been devoted to describing the English teacher on emotional management in teaching (Hawkey, 2006; Makhawathana *et.al*, 2017). Therefore, this study aimed at describing how the teacher manages

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research method used a descriptive case study. Yin (2003) claimed that the descriptive case study used to describe a phenomenon in the real-life context occurred. A descriptive case study was chosen because of the phenomenon in this study. The teacher had experience in teaching English. Based on the phenomenon that occurred in the school, the teacher was faced with various challenges such as students were difficult to handle, students rarely worked on their assignments independently or in groups, and students' attendance problems that often occurred. Therefore, the teachers should be able to manage their emotions in the class so the materials will be conveyed well for the students and the teacher can create a pleasant atmosphere in their teaching.

Setting and Participant

The research was conducted in a twelve-grade Vocational High School particularly located in Tasikmalaya West Java, Indonesia. The allowance from the institution to conduct the research, and there was the accessibility of the research to gain the data easier because the participant was part of the teacher's members.

The research involved one participant of in-service teachers in teaching at Vocational High School. The sex was female, who was around 29 years old. The reasons for recruiting her as a participant in this research are: (1) She is an English teacher (2) She has experience in emotional management during teaching English in the class; (3) She is willing to be the participant. The participant generally speaks Sundanese as their first language (L1), Bahasa Indonesia as her second language (L2), and English as their foreign language (FL). The participant has been experienced for approximately three years of managing their emotions in teaching English. In the end, the researcher would analyze the result of the interview based on the teacher's experience during English language teaching in the classroom.

Data Collection

The data of the present research was collected through semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview is suitable for studying people's perceptions, opinions, and emotionally sensitive issues (Barriball & While, 1994; Astedt-Kurki & Heikkinen, 1994). It focuses the issue on meaningful for the participant and various perceptions to be expressed (Cridland Jones, Caputi & Magee, 2015; Tandiana,

Sonia Rahmawati, *et al.* / JELS 6 (2) (2021) 195-210
Abdullah, Komara, 2017). It was chosen because the flow of the interview could be controlled and explored their emotions.

Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed the data through thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting the data based on the theme pattern. Thematic analysis was chosen because provides a rich and detailed account of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). There are six phases; familiarizing the data, generating initial codes, searching the themes, reviewing the themes, naming the themes, and producing the report.

DISCUSSION

This study investigates the teachers' emotional management during English language teaching in an ELT classroom: a case study at an Indonesian vocational high school. The finding indicated as; (1) Performing entertaining activities as a strategy of mitigating saturated teaching routine, (2) Self-relaxing and avoiding harsh words during anger, (3) Strategies to reduce the annoyance.

4.1 Performing entertaining activities as a strategy of mitigating saturated teaching routine

Performing entertaining activities becomes a strategy to face the boring teaching routine experienced by the teacher in the teaching process. As an example, the teacher admits that saturated teaching happened because of repeated teaching activities. "Usually it's caused by **monotonous activity**, whatsoever so that it's just **boring** anyway".

Excerpt 1

"Usually it's caused by **monotonous activity**, whatsoever so that it's just **boring** anyway"

(interview transcript recorded on September 6th, 2020)

Based on the answers above, it starts with praying before study every day, delivering materials using almost the same methods. It happens repeatedly that may cause boredom. Furthermore, she needs teaching innovation to manage her saturation in teaching. The teacher is aware that there is not an innovation in teaching that creates saturated teaching in the classroom. Therefore, the teacher finds ways to reduce her saturated teaching by listening to a song and using games in teaching.

Excerpt 2

"We sometimes intersperse the class with **listening songs to reduce boredom**. Honestly, I want to **watch a movie to encounter boredom**. Unfortunately, there's no projector in the classroom or we **play a game based on the materials**".

(interview transcript recorded on September 6th, 2020)

This excerpt shows that the teacher needed a way to encounter boredom so she decided to intersperse the class by listening to English songs and playing games due to the materials and it worked a lot. Besides boosting the teacher's mood, it is also made the students feel enjoy and fun. Listening to English songs is most likely because there is no projector in the classroom. Besides, it helps the teacher saturated teaching in the classroom.

Saturated teaching affects students' interest in learning. According to Davis (1993) that the behavior of teachers saturated and do not care will steal students' interest in learning so that teachers are very important to be excited in teaching. In other words, the importance of teachers' innovation in teaching to create a fun atmosphere such as listening to songs and using games can increase student interest in classroom learning. Listening to English songs in the teaching and learning process can provide entertainment and more fun activities. This is supported by Shen (2009) saying that "ELT can be implemented in a relaxed and enjoyable way by using English songs in EFL classes" (P. 88). In other words, listening to a song can reduce her saturated teaching so it can increase students' motivation and interest in learning English. Besides listening to a song, the teacher also uses games in the learning process to help reduce saturated teaching to create an interactive classroom atmosphere.

According to Mosalanejad, Razeghi & Ifard (2018), a game is an interactive, active, and fun method which has its educational purpose which can deepen skills through games. Thus, listening to the song and using the game in teaching is very effective in reducing saturated teaching in-class activities.

4.2 Self-relaxing and avoiding harsh words during anger

Self-relaxing and avoiding harsh words such as idiot, whacky, stupid during

anger are techniques that teachers need to manage their anger well to avoid negative impacts in which may affect relationship problems with their students in the teaching classroom. The teacher says "I always take a deep breath to keep myself calm. But if I have to stay in the class, I would rather be quiet, or maybe I would rather give some assignments. If my anger is over, then I would continue teaching again as possible". Self-relaxing and avoiding harsh words can help teachers manage their emotions. It can be proven from the teacher's answer below.

Excerpt 3

"I always **take a deep breath** to keep myself calm. But if I have to stay in the class, **I would rather be quiet**, or maybe I would rather give some assignments. If my anger is over, then I would continue teaching again as possible"

(interview transcript recorded on July 25th, 2020)

In this excerpt, the teacher needs to calm herself down by doing self-relaxing first, while for students, the teacher tries to divert their attention by giving assignments so that the teaching and learning process continues well. Self-relaxing that the teacher does such as deep breathing and relaxing imagery can help teachers manage their anger during teaching.

Also, when she is feeling angry, the teacher tries to calm herself down by controlling herself not to force teaching if she feels that her anger is not under her control so she tries to avoid using harsh words. The teacher says "I am not saying much. That's what I do to avoid bad words that sometimes come out accidentally and also to stifle anger. I give the students other activities while I try to manage my anger "well students please complete this assignment, I want to calm myself from being angry".

Excerpt 4

"**I am not saying much**. That's what **I do to avoid bad words** that sometimes come out accidentally and also to stifle anger. I give the students other activities while **I try to manage my anger** "well students please complete this assignment, **I want to calm myself from being angry**"

(interview transcript recorded on July 25th, 2020)

In the excerpt, the teacher chooses to get silent so that it keeps her not to say bad words controlling her anger can help the teacher minimize the negative impact that might be a problem in the relationship between the teacher and students in the classroom which can make students feel uncomfortable. Poor teacher management of anger will harm the student-teacher relationship, teacher's health, and also poor decision making and problem-solving. (Makhwathana et., al 2017). Therefore, teachers need to manage their emotions by doing self-relaxing to help teachers reduce their anger. According to Pashupati & Dev (2011) that deep breathing and relaxing imagery training techniques need to be done when someone is in a tense situation (Ma'arif, Abdullah, Fatimah, & Hidayati, 2021). Besides, by trying to do this technique the teacher can avoid uncontrolled words when she is feeling angry. The uncontrolled words will trigger unpleasant feelings and cannot be accepted well by others because communication skills are a major factor that can provoke anger towards others. (Wyer, et al., 1993).

4.3 Strategies to reduce the annoyance

Intermezzo for reducing annoyance is one way for the teacher to divert her annoyance to her students. The teacher is annoyed by her students, causes students to be lazy to write the materials, lack of interest in joining their groups, unworked assignments, and student absence from learning.

Excerpt 5

"Sometimes **male students are lazy to write the materials** taught in the classroom. **They are resisting to join a discussion with their peers** and **just sleep away**. Further than that, they sometimes **don't make the assignments** and **have a lack of attendance rate**"

(interview transcript recorded on April 7th, 2020)

The cause of the teacher feeling annoyed with her students can be seen from the teacher's statement above. Some of the problems are difficult to be

solved. These problems that often occur require teachers to find out why this can happen by building communication with students to find solutions. For example, lack of students' attendance. It takes many stakeholders to encounter this issue. As the consequence, sometimes it also becomes the reason for the teacher's anger.

Besides, the teacher's feelings of annoyance towards students, does it have an impact on the teacher so that annoyance turns into anger. Therefore, the teacher needs to manage her annoyance to find ways how the annoyance can reduce.

Excerpt 6

"I am the kind of person **who goes silent in anger**. But in the classroom, instead of **being silent**, I would **give some jokes** to the students to keep the anger away but if I felt annoyance doesn't go away, I ask the students to complete an assignment and I try to reduce annoyance by **watching funny things on YouTube** until I felt ready to teach again"

(interview transcript recorded on April 7th, 2020)

Excerpt 7

"Sometimes if I got mad, I do rebuke the students **jokingly** so that they don't get hurt. I also **tell the other not to do that again** or I ask the students to complete an assignment while I keep myself calm down by **watching youtube, social media (e.g Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp)** until I felt calm and annoyed go away".

(interview transcript recorded on April 7th, 2020)

In this excerpt, the teacher realizes that when she feels annoyed, she must stop first to manage her annoyance so after she thinks that she needs activities that divert her annoyance by inviting students to joke, watching YouTube, and open social media so she can create a pleasant atmosphere and she ready to teach again. It can be seen from the way the teacher gives advice jokingly, she tries to divert by entertaining to make her feel so good again and make

sure that the students will not repeat the mistake. This way is much better because the communication will run smoothly to keep the students from getting hurt. It also can help the teacher to build better relationships and can also help reduce her annoyance with students in the class (Amalia, Abdullah & Fatimah, 2021). The teacher needs to build good communication with her students. Good relations between teachers and students will have a positive impact on behavior in the classroom (Varga, 2017; Pramusita, 2018).

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study emphasizes how teachers manage their emotions in the teaching classroom. The three main findings are described thematically, such as; (1) Performing entertaining activities as a strategy of mitigating saturated teaching routine, (2) Self-relaxing and avoiding harsh words during anger, (3) Strategies to reduce the annoyance. The emotional experience by the teacher in the teaching classroom provides different solutions in managing her emotions, such as the teacher manage her saturated teaching by entertaining activities, the teacher manages her anger by doing self-relaxing and avoiding harsh words, and the teacher manages her annoyance by doing intermezzo first before teaching.

The significant impact of a teacher's credible ability on controlling emotion during teaching practice is truly beneficial. For instance, the condition in the classroom could be warmer, students' learning motivation would arise, and classroom ambiance feels more fun and comfortable. Therefore, teachers need to manage their emotions because it does not only harm themselves such as a teacher's health, and poor decision-making and problem-solving, but it can also affect students' interest in learning. A good teacher's emotional management can create a pleasant atmosphere and also give a positive effect on her teaching. It can build a good relationship between teachers and students and also build student interest in learning.

The limitation of this research is that it uses a single data collection technique, namely semi-structured interviews with the teacher only. This current research focuses on how the teacher manages her emotions when teaching in the class. For further research, research can be developed by looking not only at how teachers manage their emotions in class but how teachers' emotions affect students in learning. Therefore, the teachers can minimize the negative

Sonia Rahmawati, et al./ JELS 6 (2) (2021) 195-210
influence through good emotional management.

This present study uses a descriptive case study as the design. For future research, the author recommends using narrative inquiry to gain deeper meaning and elaboration. Thus, the presentation of the findings could be more comprehensible and richer.

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