

Investigating EFL Classroom Management in Pesantren: A Case Study

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1 Investigating EFL Classroom Management in Pesantren: A Case Study

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19 *Classroom management (CM) is one of the most important issues in education and this research was aimed at understanding the classroom management problems and the coping strategies of Indonesian Islamic Boarding schools' [hereinafter-termed pesantren] with the uniqueness of their system from the perspectives of the English teachers. Specifically, the purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom management (CM) problems and the coping strategies of Indonesian Islamic boarding schools' teachers. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGD), observation with eight English teachers working in the three pesantren. We organized our analysis and discussion around their perspectives and the contexts in which the classroom management problems and the coping strategies they encountered emerged. Seven major themes emerged, which were (1) challenged by students' participation and motivation, (2) managing students' behaviors: between punishment and encouragement, (3) dealing with three languages in the classroom, (4) teachers' performance as a source of challenges in CM, (4) teachers' discipline: rule breaking due to lower salary, (5) non major English teachers, but forced to teach English, (6) struggling with time management, and (7) struggling to manage large classes. Keywords: Case Study, Classroom Management, Indonesian Islamic Boarding Schools, Pesantren*

Introduction

11 A pesantren in Indonesia has been significantly contributing to education across the country since pre-Indonesian Independence time. Pesantren are Islamic based schools, offering two curricula in its teaching and learning process—namely the Indonesian national curriculum, which is conducted in the morning classes, and the Islamic religious curriculum, which takes place in the evening classes (Sofwan & Habibi, 2016). As the oldest Indonesian education schools, pesantren have historically implemented English as a foreign language (EFL) as one of the compulsory subjects in its national curriculum (Daulay, 2009; Kamil, Mukminin, & Kasim, 2014; Sofwan & Habibi, 2016). The currently distinctive Indonesian pesantren comprises of a “pondok” (a boarding school) (Dhofier, 1982) and a madrasah (a

day school) (Zuhdi, 2006). A pesantren is similar to a community with a complex, mosque, and boarding facility in that santri (students) and ustaz (teachers) eat, sleep, learn, and generally interact throughout the day (Buang, 2007; Nilan, 2007; Srimulyani, 2007). Dissimilarly to pesantren, the Madrasah—an Islamic day school—teaches children and youth both general/secular subjects and religious subjects. Moreover, madrasahs do not need students to spend their whole day at school, which lets them to meet with their family and society (Nilan, 2007; Srimulyani, 2007). Most students in pesantren live in boarding rooms where they spend 24 hours a day socializing with their counterparts, and this reality brings various situation and phenomena both academically and socially (Daulay, 2009).

We were interested in exploring the classroom management coping mechanisms of English teachers working in pesantren, partly because as schools they are unique and partly because there has been limited research conducted on them. We decided to do this study as an effort to provide information for educational policy makers at national and local levels to help them frame any kinds of supporting programs or training for English teachers at pesantren in Jambi, Indonesia.

Classroom management (CM) is an important issue in education for school teachers, university lecturers, school leaders, system administrators, and the public as users of schools. Students' characteristics, teacher efficacy, environmental situations, and the standards of achievement of students are influential factors in CM (Baker, Lang, & Lawson, 2004; Fowler & Şaraplı, 2010; Kaya & Dönmez, 2009). In the context of Indonesia, classroom management is defined as a set of techniques and skills that allow a teacher to control students effectively in order to create a positive learning environment for all students (Ministry of National Education, [MoNE], 2003). The importance of classroom management particularly in teaching English as a second or foreign language, has become the focus of several previous enquiries (e.g., Aydın & Bahçe, 2001; İnceçay & Dollar, 2012; Kerdikoshvili, 2012; Merç & Subaşı, 2015; Qinglan, Junyan, & Shongshan, 2010; Sasidher, Vanaja, & Parimalavenu, 2012; Tahir & Qadir, 2012; Tuncay, 2010).

For example, Kayıkçı (2009), who studied the impacts of teachers' CM skills on the disciplined behavior of students, found that a good teacher-student relationship and communication, recognition of student characteristics and needs, setting up definite class rules, the motivation of students and arrangement of classroom environment could decrease students' problems in CM. Additionally, Merç and Subaşı (2015) who investigated twelve EFL student teachers found that student teachers' CM problems mainly resulted from the students in the classroom, student teachers themselves, teaching point and materials, and the collaborating teachers. Also, Sasidher, Vanaja, and Parimalavenu (2012) listed four major factors impeding CM - namely, time management, socio-cultural differences, lack of student motivation, and large size classroom. The findings of these three studies in the contexts of EFL classroom have indicated that classroom management is one of the important issues influencing teacher and student performance in education.

Although there is substantial literature on the issues of CM, it is somewhat surprising and regrettable that, to our knowledge, not much research effort has focused on EFL classroom management problems and coping strategies in pesantren, Indonesia. This study attempted to fill a gap in the pesantren literature by studying EFL CM problems and coping strategies at a micro level. As the oldest school system in Indonesia, pesantren hold a very important role (Sofwan & Habibi, 2016). There are more than 25,000 pesantren with more or less 3.7 million students scattered in 33 Indonesian provinces. With EFL included as a compulsory course in the curriculum, it is important to analyze how it is implemented including the classroom management part. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the EFL CM problems and the coping strategies of Indonesian Islamic boarding school teachers. The following main questions guided our research: What are the sources of

the classroom management problems faced by pesantren English teachers? And how do they deal with those classroom management problems?

Literature Review

The phrase *classroom management*, which is also called “classroom control” and *classroom discipline*, is the most well-known concept referring to what we name as the management of the classroom while teaching is taking place. Basically, classroom management is delineated as the way to encompass the decisions teachers make concerning the use of space and time in the classrooms in which teachers stand and whom they look at. Additionally, it is the way teachers submit queries and check the understanding during the processes of teaching and learning. Consequently, the goal of effective classroom management is to provide a positive climate that enhances learning (Qinglan, Junyan, & Shongshan, 2010; Tuncay, 2010).

The beneficial outcome of a well-managed physical environment enables the comfort of the learning and teaching process, fostering class participation. Contrarily, an unprepared and unmanaged classroom environment has negative effects on students’ learning and participation in activities, which increases CM problems (Kayıkçı, 2009; Sasidher, Vanaja, & Parimalavenu, 2012). CM problems appear due to the failure in managing the resources of the classrooms in some factors (Matus, 1999; Sasidher, Vanaja, & Parimalavenu, 2012). Furthermore, Matus (1999) stated that CM problems derive from someone’s personal factors, such as family problems, home factors, feelings of inadequacy, and financial factors. Similarly, Sasidher, Vanaja, and Parimalavenu (2012) found four major factors impeding classroom management—namely, time management, socio-cultural differences, lack of student motivation, and a large size classroom. In conclusion, CM problems emerge due to the failure in managing the related resources.

In terms of coping strategies with classroom management problems, Kayıkçı (2009), who studied the impacts of teachers’ CM skills on the disciplined behavior of students, revealed that to decrease problems in CM, a good teacher-student relationship and communication, recognition of student characteristics and needs, an establishment of definite class rules, the motivation of students and arrangement of classroom environment were among the strategies. In addition, the importance of motivation as a solution for classroom management problems was examined by Kerdikoshvili (2012) who highlighted the ways of dealing with CM in EFL and discipline problems for Georgian context. This study noted the close links between the principles of effective CM and the principles of learning and motivation. Time management is also one of the significant factors of effective CM within an EFL context.

The Researchers

The first author for this study is a lecturer, qualitative researcher, and Indonesian international graduate student who is pursuing a doctoral degree in education in one university in Malaysia funded by the Endowment Fund for Education (LPDP). The second author holds a PhD in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from a United States public university. He had experience and training in qualitative research by taking various courses at a graduate level, including qualitative research methods, qualitative data analysis, and research methods in education. The third author is a researcher in one public university in Jambi, Indonesia. The fourth author is a junior teaching staff member in one public university in Jambi, Indonesia. The fifth author is a researcher in the Jambi local research and

development unit, Indonesia. The sixth, seventh, and eighth authors are researchers in a state Islamic university in South Sumatra, Indonesia.

During the authors' careers, they have interacted with a variety of teachers including Islamic boarding school teachers. We were interested in exploring the classroom management problems and coping mechanisms of Islamic boarding school teachers because we discovered that these issues remained unexplored. Thus, through this study, we wanted to better understand the experiences of Islamic boarding school teachers and contribute to the literature. Also, through this study, we wanted to provide information for educational policy makers at national and local levels to help them frame any kinds of supporting programs or training for Islamic boarding schools' teachers.

Methodology of the Research

For this study, a qualitative design in the case study tradition was used to document the undocumented EFL classroom management problems and the coping strategies of Indonesian Islamic boarding school teachers. To achieve the purpose of the study, two main questions guided our research: What are the sources of the classroom management problems faced by pesantren English teachers? And how do they deal with those classroom management problems?

For the design of the study, we were influenced by the work of the three methodologists in the area of case study research, Stake (1995), Merriam (1998), and Yin (2014). They describe a case study as a bounded system, in which the investigators set out boundaries and build clear accounts about the emphasis and extent of the investigation. Stake (1995) defined a case study as a holistic (special consideration to mutual relations between the phenomenon and its contexts), empirical (based on observation), interpretive (researchers' intuition), empathic (emic perspective to mirror on how individuals think), and integrated design. Yin (2014) defined a case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the case) in depth and within its real-world context" (p. 16) while Merriam (1998) defined a case study as "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit" (p. xiii). She (1998) further argued that an exploratory case study was suitable when the focus of the investigation has not been examined exhaustively as is the case with EFL CM problems and the coping strategies of Indonesian Islamic boarding school teachers. Merriam (1998) also suggested that through studying an understudied issue, scholars obtain chances for exploring relevant aspects and for providing a descriptive basis for future and larger studies. In our study, the case study design was chosen as our approach to document the undocumented EFL CM problems and the coping strategies of Indonesian Islamic boarding schools' teachers in Jambi, Indonesia. Following up what Merriam (1998) said that a case study was suitable if the focus of study had not studied. We deemed that the case study tradition was chosen as the focus of this study had not been studied, particularly, EFL classroom management problems and the coping strategies at three Islamic boarding schools in Jambi, Indonesia. The selection of a qualitative case study tradition in our study was because the findings of this study might not be generalized to the other Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia.

Research Site, Sampling, Procedures, and Participants

Getting access is very essential in collecting qualitative data. This study was undertaken at three Islamic boarding schools in Jambi, Indonesia, which is located on the island of Sumatra. Moslem students from both Jambi and some surrounding provinces attend

the pesantren, where English is a compulsory subject taught. The three pesantren were not funded by the government either local or national ones. They were self-funding pesantren. To operate their educational processes, they obtained financial support from parents who sent their children to the three pesantren. In this study, we used a purposeful sampling with a convenience case strategy. Creswell (2007) wrote, "convenience cases [are those] which represent sites or individuals from which researchers can access and easily collect data" (p. 126).

We used this strategy in selecting the research sites and participants because we had access to do research and collect data at the sites. Through the adoption of a qualitative case study approach for our study, the findings of this study should not be generalized to the other pesantren or participants. Participants of this study were previously and officially invited by letter. Eight of twelve invited English teachers across three pesantren (A, B, and C) voluntarily consented to participate. All of them are Indonesians. When we conducted this study, each participant had more than 5 years' experience in teaching English. The demographic questionnaire was distributed to get general data of their age, experience, and educational qualifications.

Submission to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was not made as it is not common in Indonesia. However, in order to protect the rights of human participants, we provided them with an informed consent form. Participants' decision to take part in this study was entirely voluntary. We explained to our participants that they had a right to not answer our questions and to stop from being a participant anytime they wanted to stop. All of participants agreed that their statements would be included in the final report as before we interviewed them, we explained the purpose of our study and the consequences of their statements as our data. We told our participants that we would always ask them before we used their data. One thing that our participants wanted us to do was not to mention their real names in the final report or publication. We masked the names of participants and research sites through the use of pseudonyms.

Eight of twelve invited English teachers across three pesantren (A, B, and C) voluntarily agreed to participate in this study. All of them are Indonesians. When we conducted this study, each participant had more than 7 years' experience in teaching English. Two of our participants did not major in English teaching. However, they had participated in English training provided by the local department of education or by the local department of religious affairs. Based on their stories, they taught English because their pesantren were not funded by the government and were not able to pay English teachers while they had more classes and students. Such a situation had motivated them to teach English in their own pesantren. We masked the names of people, places, and the research site through the use of pseudonyms for the participants, places, and sites. For the names of our participants, we used T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, and T8.

Data Collection and Analysis

We used semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGD), and observations as techniques of data collection. In addition, both the interviews and FGDs were conducted in Indonesian to provide more understanding of ideas and arguments. We interviewed each participant using Mi3S (a smartphone) in three different places, pesantren A, B, and C from April - August 2016. Each interview lasted 30-32 minutes. In August 2016, we asked and officially invited them to participate in a focus group discussion held in pesantren A, B, and C for almost two hours and the data were also recorded with the same smartphone. Fewer pesantren participated in the A and B focus group discussion. We did the FGDs in order to confirm and support the data from individual's interviews and observations. Guided by the

interview protocol that we designed based on the reviews of prior research including learning expectations, learning objectives, learning sources, learning opportunities, teaching methods, learning environment, discipline, student Engagement, assessment, language proficiency during the interview and FGDs, we asked the participants about what kinds of sources of CM problems during the teaching and learning processes. They were also asked to respond to the questions related to major sources of CM problems. They were also asked to comment on how they dealt with such sources of CM problems and why they used such strategies to deal with different kinds of CM problems. Next, the observation activities were carried out by one of us in the three English classes for a period of 5 months at each pesantren in order to obtain field evidence data. Additionally, note-taking during these observations served to support the data from both the interview and the FGD. In dealing with the trustworthiness of the research, the researchers applied triangulation, member checking, and reflexivity (Lincoln & Guba 1985, p. 300 as cited in Mukminin, 2012). The researchers did triangulation in the research by analyzing the data from three perspectives of data collection techniques interview, FGD, and observation. To verify the accuracy of the results and interpretations, member checking (Creswell, 2012; Mukminin, Ali, & Fadloan, 2015; Mukminin & McMahon, 2013; Mukminin, Kamil, Muazza, & Haryoto, 2017; Mukminin, Rohayati, Putra, Habibi, & Aina, 2017) was used. We gave back the transcribed interview data, findings, and final report to each teacher. This was chosen to ensure that each teacher was in agreement with the data which we obtained and used from them and all teachers or participants allowed us to use the data in our research. As presented in the following table.

Table 1. Triangulation and verification methods

| Triangulation and verification methods | Sources or strategies |
|--|---|
| Member checks | Teachers |
| Focus group discussion | Teachers in three research sites |
| Observations | Field notes from classrooms in three research sites |

Analyzing data in a qualitative study always challenges researchers as the data are messy and time-consuming while no fixed agreement is for the analysis of qualitative data. In the words of Chenail (2012, p. 266), “One of the biggest challenges in conducting qualitative data analysis is deciding on what piece of the data constitutes a meaningful unit to analyze.” In this study, to synthesize data from semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGD), and observations, first we listened to the audiotape of interviews and focus group discussions (FGD). At the same time, we read and analyzed the data from observations. Second, we transcribed each interview and focus group discussion and we read all the transcripts and the data from observations. After we read all the data line-by-line or word-by-word for obtaining the sense of the data and in order to “have potential as qualitatively meaningful undivided units to analyze... to focus on units shorter and longer than an arbitrary line of text” (Chenail, 2012, p. 266), we used “a word processing tool such as Microsoft Word’s Insert Comment reviewing option” (Chenail, 2012, p. 266). Through using Word’s Insert Comment reviewing option (particularly using the left justified lines of texts), it could help us focus on the units of transcripts (interviews and focus group discussions and observation data) to develop codes and even themes/categories related to English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom management problems and the coping strategies of Indonesian Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) teachers. For example, the theme “Dealing with three languages in the classroom: Indonesian, English, and Arabic languages” was obtained after we analyzed (through Word’s Insert Comment reviewing option) the statements from participants (e.g., T7),

The students tend to using Bahasa Indonesia [Indonesian language] and Arabic rather than English because Bahasa Indonesia [Indonesian language] is their mother tongue and they frequently use Arabic because it is taught almost for 10 hours a week. I always help them to use English in their daily conversation in English classes (T7).

Last, the process of analyzing units of transcripts with word's insert comment tool was helpful when comparing data among participants and was useful to provide a quick digital reference relating to detailed themes or categories within each participant regarding English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom management problems and the coping strategies of Indonesian Islamic boarding schools.

Findings

In light of the participant data obtained in the interview and FGD sessions, as well as in classroom observations, the problems and coping strategies of teachers of English in the three pesantren in Jambi in association with classroom management were categorized into seven major themes including (1) challenged by students' participation and motivation, (2) managing students' behaviours: Between punishment and encouragement, (3) dealing with three languages in the classroom, (4) teachers' performance as a source of challenges in CM, (4) Teachers' discipline: rule breaking due to lower salary, (5) non major English teachers, but forced to teach English, (6) struggling with time management, and (7) struggling to manage large classes.

Challenged by Students' Participation and Motivation

Based on the interviews and FGDs data, our participants reported that they were challenged by students' participation and motivation as the major problems in teaching English in the classroom. Lack of students' participation and motivation forced teachers to manage their involvement in the teaching and learning processes. For example, T1 and T5 reported,

I believe that the first problem that I should mention is the students' lack of motivation and participation in speaking and the other skills, reading, and writing. It seems to me that the students are afraid of doing something with English (T1).

I agree that the students' participation is the common problem appeared in CM (T5 in FGD).

In the observation sessions, students in pesantren, *santri* (male student) or *santriwati* (female student) must attend English classes for 4 hours a week. The researcher who did the observation sat on the backside of the classes to make them comfortable with the situation. In the class participation, the students were encouraged and sometimes forced to do activities in the session because they seemed to be afraid and anxious when their teachers told them to speak up or write in front of the class. It is similar to the results of the interview where the participants revealed the same stories.

Managing Students' Behaviours: Between Punishment and Encouragement

The second theme is related to students who were misbehaving. When the researchers did the observation, there were some students who came late, talked without their teachers' permission, had a joke, and even had a fight with other students. Such a situation forced researchers to help the teacher to separate students who were fighting. These misbehaving students also became a source of problems in the classroom management. Also, in pesantren fighting with other students is one of the major rules-breaking. As a result, those who fought with other students were given a tough punishment. For example, their heads were shaved by the school teachers. In the interview and FGD sessions, this kind of information was revealed by the participants. For example,

I am sometimes mad with some naughty students. You know what, they are friends inside and outside the classroom since the students live in a boarding room. They interact not only in the classroom, but also outside the classroom, but they sometimes fight each other because they had too many jokes. I gave them physical punishment sometimes but I also warned them and told them not to do the mistake anymore (T4).

The stubborn and naughty students might be a factor or main problem in pesantren. We did physical punishment as the last effort like shaving their head, asking them to stand on the football field, and hitting them with you know Rotan (a wooden small stick) (T2 in FGD).

Yep, I do agree with his [referring to one of the opinions of the other FGD members]. Misbehaving students, they came late, fought, talked all the time in the classroom, and etc. I gave them punishment (T6 in FGD).

According to the data presented above, in coping with the problems of disobedient students, participants in this study tended to use some coping strategies such as warning verbally, using eye contact, giving advice, and physical punishment. However, in this study, participants tended to avoid physical punishment their students as the last choice. If they used physical punishment, they preferred to use such as shaving their head or asking them to stand on the football field.

Dealing with Three Languages in the Classroom: Indonesian, English, and Arabic Languages

In the three pesantren (A, B, and C), there is a written rule regarding to the use of foreign languages (Arabic and English) that should be obeyed by the students who live in the school. In irregular weeks, students were asked to use English and Arabic languages only. However, practically students did not follow the rule in their English classes and they continued to speak Indonesian (their mother tongue) to communicate to each other. In the moment of observation, this problem was found and noted as one of the significant problems in classroom management in EFL teaching in pesantren.

The issue of the first language use in EFL classroom was voiced by participants during the interview and FGD sessions. For example, T8 who had been teaching for more than 8 years at the time of interview reported that the use of Indonesian language was another major problem in teaching and learning English. He tried several ways to encourage his students to use their English during the lesson, he reflected,

Using Bahasa Indonesia [Indonesian language] is also the problem in our classroom, students are assigned [managed] to speak English for whole one week but you know even in English classes they still use their first language. I think I have to be creative in reducing the use of Bahasa Indonesia [Indonesian language] namely through reminding them to use English, warning them, and giving reward when they speak English for some period of time (T8).

T7 who had been an English teacher for 28 years at the time of interview added that students tended to use their first language although they were studying English. To deal with such a situation, he guided his students to use English every day, at least during the English lesson. He reported,

The students tend to using Bahasa Indonesia [Indonesian language] and Arabic rather than English because Bahasa Indonesia [Indonesian language] is their mother tongue and they frequently use Arabic because it is taught almost for 10 hours a week. I always help them to use English in their daily conversation in English classes (T7).

Another teacher who had become a teacher for about 25 years, T5, reported that managing English classes was not easy. The main challenge was the use of Indonesian language in the English lesson by his students. He used a variety of ways to encourage his students to use English in the classroom. He reflected,

The domination of Bahasa Indonesia [Indonesian language] in English classes is problems appearing in our classroom and we try manage it by reducing it through many ways such as warning, giving punishment and reward, fun activities and etc. (T5 in FGD).

All participants reported that managing students' focus on using English in English classes was challenging. They had to deal with three languages in the classroom, namely Indonesian, English, and Arabic. To deal with such a situation, participants tried to involve their students in English class activities through a variety of strategies or ways including giving rewards to their students or creating fun activities.

Teachers' Performance as a Source of Challenges in CM

The next important theme as we found in the interviews, FGDs, and in the observation was teachers' performance as a source of challenges in CM.

Teachers' teaching performance include teachers' lack of preparation, difficulties in introducing new techniques and beginning the lesson, problems in organizing group works, and unclear instruction that were found in the observation as a source of the challenges in CM... In the sessions of interviews and FGDs, participants reported that teachers' performance as the source of the problems in CM. With regard to teachers' teaching performance, participants reported, for example,

We realize our weakness in teaching such as lack of new techniques and lack of fun activities to share with the students. I hope our government could invite us [pesantren teachers] to attend teaching training to improve our professionalism (T1).

The classroom management is a part of the problem that we have to face every day. We teach large classes with more than 40 students in one class. The problems are in grouping the students, delivering the instruction and etc. I always make my voice louder in that matter and always try to update my pedagogical skill and allow them to choose their own group (T3).

The data above indicated that our participants' low teaching performance was due to several factors including lack of new techniques, big class sizes, lack of supervision and evaluation from the educational stakeholders and lack of training or professional development. Participants felt that their performance indirectly and directly influenced their performance to teach and to manage the classroom. Their low performance would influence both the quality of English teaching and student achievement in English.

Teachers' Discipline: Rule Breaking due to Lower Salary

Another interesting finding in our study was related to teachers' discipline as a source of CM problems. The issue of teachers' discipline emerged among the participants. However, it is interesting as in the observation, we rarely found teachers coming late or doing undisciplined things. Conversely, in the group discussion, some of the teachers honestly revealed a mind-blowing fact about their low wages triggering the acts of rules breaking such as having another job in a different place. Their acts indirectly affected the ways they organized and managed their classroom, particularly their teaching activities. They revealed,

I am not a civil servant [a government employee] and sometimes coming late in my teaching process. I have been a teacher for 8 years and the salary is not enough for me and family. So that, I am not really professional in my teaching, I am sometimes late and sometimes absent. I know my behaviors will influence my teaching activities (T8 in FGD).

Our salary [lower salary] forces us to have backed up plans in our lives regardless our main profession as teachers such as having another work. Having another work in another place, of course, would influence our concentration on managing our teaching activities (T3 in FGD).

The participants' statements above indicated that the issue of teachers' discipline was related to their status as non-government employees. As a result, they reported that their income influenced their discipline and professionalism. They had to find another financial support for their family as reported by T8 and T34. They hope their local or national governments would pay attention to their condition.

Non Major English Teachers, but Forced to Teach English

As we discussed in the method part, two of the teachers (T3 & T8) who taught English subject majored in educational management (T3) and education technology (T8). However, they had followed several teaching trainings and had teaching certificates. During the interview and FGD sessions, the two teachers reported that they faced some challenges (problems in teaching English skills and other related issues in English teaching) although they had been trained by the local department of education. Such challenges covertly and directly challenged them to manage their teaching activities in English lessons. For example,

I graduated from educational management and I am not good at communicating in English and I think that is my major problem in managing my classroom. However, my boss, *Mudir* [the leader] asked me to teach (T3).

Instructional technology is my major and certainly English is not my thing but I have been assigned to teach English and I have to deal with it. I keep practicing English with my friends and bring equipment like my dictionary and smartphone in my English classes (T8).

The two teachers were requested to teach English because first they had been trained to teach English and their pesantren lacked English teachers but had more students. Such a situation forced them to teach English. Although they did not major in English education and were challenged by a variety of problems in teaching, they managed to keep teaching their students in pesantren. They even managed their own strategies to keep improving their English ability including asking their colleagues or participating in training.

Struggling with Time Management

In the observation sessions, we noted that time management was one of the sources of the CM problems appearing in pesantren. Unlike Indonesian public schools which have more than four hours a week for students to learn English and cover all materials of English in one semester (Sofwan & Habibi, 2016), in pesantren, time which ⁴⁵ available for teaching English subject in a week is four hours. It is worsened by the fact that English is a compulsory subject in pesantren and as one of the tested subjects in the national exam. Consequently, it became a holdback for teachers to finish the lesson as it was scheduled. Additionally, the data from the interview and FGD sessions indicated that participants reported that time to teach English was not enough while lessons that they had to teach were more. They had problems to manage and adjust between the lessons and time which is available. For example, T4 reported,

Time is the factor that we should pay attention. I have difficulties to manage the time in every meeting. Students are hard to understand the materials in limited time while English is tested in the national exam. I sometimes skip some unimportant activities (T4).

T4 reflected that it was not easy to manage all lessons. He even skipped some lessons related to the national exam. This situation made teachers in this study feel overloaded as T7 reported,

There are a lot of things that must be done in three years. If you ask me about the time, I don't think we have enough time to complete all task recommended by the Indonesian government and their books. I ask them to do many assignments in their rooms. I feel overloaded with teaching materials while time is limited and the number of students in the class is a lot and it is difficult to manage (T7).

⁵¹

The data from this study indicated that all participants struggled with their time management. Their workload was overwhelming while time to teach English was limited. Such a situation led them to ignore some teaching materials that are important for students. Limited time available to teach English made teachers difficult to manage their teaching materials and

measure student achievement while their students must take the national standardized exam held by the Ministry of the National Education.

Struggling to Manage Large Classes

Large classes and seating management were the issues that we found in this study. However, it is not surprising because in Indonesia either public schools or pesantren, both of them have students in one class between 35 and 40 even 45 individuals. In our study, in the observations, we found that every classroom had 40 students with long chairs and desks for two students. These kinds of chairs and desks are not easily moved because the room is not big. During the interviews and FGDs, participants also reported that large classes and seating management were one of their challenges in CM. For example, T6 reported,

Large classes are my problem in teaching activities. I struggled to manage many students in the class. Especially, in teaching English, I have 40 and 45 students in one class. You can imagine it is not easy to manage. Large classes also make me difficult to ask students to work in group (T6).

For T6, large classes made him uneasy to set up EFL classroom activities. For example, when he asked his students to work in group, he found it difficult to manage or put students into a specific group when he taught language skills such as speaking. For other participants, T3, large classes were one of the major problems in teaching English and it forced him to speak louder as he had 40 students in the class.

Large classes I do agree with the statement of large classes and seating arrangement problems. One of the coping strategies is to speak more aloud (T3).

With regard to large classes, T1 during the FGD voiced that an EFL class should be small. Large classes prevented them from achieving the target of every lesson plan. He reflected,

When we are talking about the size of all the classrooms, we do agree that the number of the students should be limited to get ideal classes and to easily place the students in groups. We try our best to increase our performance in teaching (T1 in FGD).

Based the data above, teachers in this study struggled to manage their classrooms and students in order to teach effectively in terms of achieving every competence in every lesson plan. However, although they were challenged by such situations, they tried to handle the problems by using some ways including speaking aloud, letting the students choose their own group in group activities.

Discussion, Implications, and Limitations

³⁸ Classroom management which is defined “as the actions teachers take to create an environment that supports and facilitates both academic and social-emotional learning” (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006, p. 4) has been a subject matter in educational research for years. It has become a continuing topic for researchers, educational policymakers, and educational professionals as if a teacher struggles to teach in the classroom, his or her students seem to be unsuccessful in learning. Marzano, Marzano, and Pickering (2003, p. 6)

argue, “Teachers play various roles in a typical classroom, but surely one of the most important is that of classroom manager. Effective teaching and learning cannot take place in a poorly managed classroom.” In spite of the enduring concern of educational practitioners and researchers, research focusing explicitly on classroom management in pesantren is still limited. Particularly, none of prior studies has focused on English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom management problems in Indonesian Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). This is exacerbated by the fact pesantren is characteristically disadvantaged and santri (students) live in underprivileged conditions under strict rules (Nilan, 2007) although pesantren provide significant supports for Indonesians’ Islamic education (Buang, 2007). Our study intended to explore English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom management problems and the coping strategies of Indonesian Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) teachers. It was not easy to determine the dominant problems that pesantren teachers encountered related to classroom management in teaching English as a foreign language as a variety of problems seemed to be involvedly interconnected. Our findings indicated that seven major themes emerged from the interviews, FGD sessions, and classroom observations among the eight participants including (1) challenged by students’ participation and motivation, (2) managing students’ behaviors: between punishment and encouragement, (3) dealing with three languages in the classroom, (4) teachers’ performance as a source of challenges in CM, (4) Teachers’ discipline: rule breaking due to lower salary, (5) non major English teachers, but forced to teach English, (6) struggling with time management, and (7) struggling to manage large classes.

Employing a qualitative case study, our research may provide educational policymakers, researchers of Islamic boarding schools, and educational professionals with a portrait of what Indonesian Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) teachers faced in teaching English in their classrooms and how they handled their teaching activities. One of our findings was that participants were challenged by students’ participation and motivation. Our finding is in line with what Sasidher, Vanaja, and Parimalavenu (2012) listed that one of the four major factors impeding CM was lack of student motivation. Our finding is also supportive what Kayıkçı (2009) and Kerdikoshvili (2012) argued that the motivation of students could influence teachers’ classroom management. In our study, participants were challenged by lack of students’ participation and motivation in learning English in the classroom. Our participants were forced to manage their students’ involvement in the learning processes. This kind of situation is supportive what Merç and Subaşı (2015) found that student teachers’ CM problems mainly were from the students in the classroom. Regardless of lack of students’ participation and motivation in learning, the interesting thing that we found from our participants was that our participants worked hard to encourage their students to do activities during the learning processes.

In our study, we also found that our participants strived to manage students’ behaviors. They were challenged when they should punish and encourage their students. Sadly, no matter how prepared our participants are and how efficiently they structure their classroom, they will ultimately meet some problematic students. Merç and Subaşı (2015) in their study found that students were also the source of classroom management problems. Ideally, successfully managed classrooms are arranged with a minimum of student misbehaviors. Long and Frye (1985, p. 13) claim, “...effective teachers can prevent all discipline problems by keeping students interested in learning through the use of exciting classroom materials and activities.” Nonetheless, in our study participants had faced inappropriate behaviors from their students. One explanation for inappropriate behaviors is because there is a cultural difference between home and school. Student’s behavior may be acceptable at his or her home, but it may be unacceptable at his or her school. Such cultural differences could make students to respond in unexpected ways to teacher’s behavior-

management techniques. Consequently, they were forced to punish their students to keep students focus on learning and lessen the possibility of classroom disruption while our participants rewarded their students for good behaviors. ²³

Our study has provided clear empirical evidence that our participants were challenged to manage and to deal with three languages (Indonesian, English, and Arabic) in the classroom and it is also worsen by the fact that our two participants did not major in English education, but they were forced to teach English. They actually had undergone some language training. But they felt it was not enough to help them to teach their students. As a result, the ⁵⁷ faced with a significant language barrier which influenced their teaching activities. Marzano, Marzano, and Pickering (2003) state, “Effective teachers are skilled at identifying ⁵⁶ and articulating the proper sequence and pacing of their content” (p. 4), suggesting that effective ⁷ classroom teachers are more skilled at managing their student learning. The objective of effective classroom management is to offer a positive environment that increases student learning (Qinglan, Junyan, & Shongshan, 2010; Tuncay, 201⁵). Additionally, in talking about classroom management and student achievement, ideally, all students should have the same English language level. Conversely, in our study, participants reported that due to students’ limited basic knowledge in English language, their students tended to speak more of their native language amongst themselves and less English. Managing a classroom where all students speak the same language has challenged our participants in this study.

Two other interesting findings in our study were teachers’ low teaching performance ⁵⁵ a source of challenges in CM and teachers’ discipline: rule breaking due to lower salary. Evertson and Weinstein (2006, p. 4) state, “classroom management is a multifaceted endeavor that is far more complex than establishing rules, rewards, and penalties to control students’ behavior.” In other words, effectively managed classrooms should be a vehicle for helping students to develop their potential to the highest level. However, the findings of our study indicated a different story. Our participants reported that their teaching performance was low because of lack of new techniques, lack of training or professional development, lower salary, and lack of supervision and evaluation from the educational stakeholders. They also realized that their low teaching performance indirectly and directly ⁵⁴ influenced their effective classroom management, which finally would influence both the ¹⁶ quality of English teaching and student achievement in English. This is contrary with what Marzano, Marzano, and Pickering (2003) state that effective classroom teachers are the managers who are highly skilled at creating and organizing learning activities that introduce new knowledge in various designs and media. Additionally, Matus (1999) stated that one of the sources of the CM problems was financial factors. Our participants in the study wanted to improve their teaching performance through the intervention of the educational stakeholders at national or local levels. ⁴⁴

Evertson and Weinstein (2006) argue that classroom management owns two important aims, “It not only seeks to establish and sustain an orderly environment, so students can engage in meaningful academic ⁵³ learning, it also aims to enhance students’ social and moral growth (p. 4).” However, Evertson and Weinstein’s (2006) claim depends how effective teachers manage their time in teaching and learning processes. Sasidher, Vanaja, and Parimalavenu (2012) listed that of four major factors impeding classroom management was time management. Our finding indicated that participants were struggling with time management. They had time constraints while they had to teach many teaching materials based on the national curriculum. Time constraints had made teachers difficult to manage their English teaching materials and measure student achievement. They might have many ideas for amazing classroom activities, but they had no plenty of time to carry them out. They

43

might not use management to ensure that students are actively involved in learning and might have difficulties to set the stage for instruction.

Struggling to manage large classes was one of our important findings as it is common in Indonesian schools including in pesantren to have more than 40 students in a classroom. Sasidher, Vanaja, and Parimalavenu (2012) pointed out that large size classroom was one of the factors that hinder effective classroom management. Large classes will influence how a teacher organises the learning, gives instructions, and maintains control and discipline. Emmer, Sanford, Clements, and Martin (1982) state, "If a teacher cannot obtain students' cooperation and involve them in instructional activities, it is unlikely that effective teaching will take place" (p. 13). The larger the class, the less every student will contribute to the learning activities. Participants in our study struggled to manage their classrooms in order to teach effectively in terms of achieving every competence in every lesson plan. Interestingly, such challenging situations did not prevent them from teaching English to their students. Instead, they handled the problems by using some ways including speaking aloud and letting the students choose their own group in group activities.

The findings of this study shed light on our understanding of how English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom management problems and the coping strategies of Indonesian Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) teachers looks like. The findings of our study should become inputs for educational policymakers, researchers of Islamic boarding schools, and educational professionals who might be interested in helping Indonesian Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) to solve classroom management challenges to make effectively managed classrooms in pesantren. Local government in cooperation with pesantren stakeholders and local universities should provide teachers with a variety of training to deal with students as the sources of CM problems. It will be valuable to provide them with in-service training in their area as their pesantren have no enough fund to participate in professional development training. Our findings also revealed that participants in this study faced problems related to their teaching skills in teaching. Local government in cooperation with pesantren stakeholders and local universities should provide them with programs for helping them receive and internalize practices, training, experience, and supports related to lack of new techniques in teaching. We also found that participants had problems with their discipline. However, their lack of discipline was not due to their laziness; rather they had to find financial supports from other sources (e.g., working or teaching in other places) as their income from pesantren was not enough. Local government in cooperation with pesantren stakeholders should provide them with more incentives so that they remain in school for the whole week and day. Failure to provide supporting policies or programs will make the quality of teaching in pesantren remains behind public schools which receive more supports from the government either local or national.

8

The results of this current study should be taken into account in the view of some limitations. Regardless of the fact that our study will potentially provide readers with the sort of evidence necessary for supporting pesantren and teachers in terms of educational and non-educational programs and policies. Participants in this study may not be representative of all Indonesian pesantren. There may be differences of EFL classroom management (CM) problems encountered by pesantren teachers from other areas. Future research may include a larger sample of pesantren teachers from areas in Indonesia qualitatively and quantitatively.

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