



P-ISSN 2355-2794
E-ISSN 2461-0275

Revisiting the Implementation of Active Learning Pedagogy in EFL Classrooms

Merina Devira*

Department of English Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Samudra, Langsa, Aceh 24354, INDONESIA

Abstract

The present study investigated the current development of active learning pedagogy implementation, focusing on the English subject, at high school classrooms in Langsa, Aceh, Indonesia. It focused on English teachers' pedagogical practices undertaken at the classrooms during the lessons and the factors impeding the construction of active learning methodology. A qualitative method was used, which employed the instruments of classroom observations, interviews, and lesson plan reviews. It was conducted in four lessons at three different high schools located in eastern Aceh, Langsa. The participants of this study were four English teachers and eleventh grade students who were actively involved in the observed English lessons. The findings showed that the dominant teachers' role and students' engagement in the class teaching-learning practices were not yet incorporated as active learning principles. Then, there was a lack of teachers' understanding on the concept of active learning pedagogy, less provided trainings on active learning methodology, no provision of teaching-learning media at classrooms, and individual students were considered as influential factors in implementing an active learning pedagogy in these classrooms. Hence, future researchers are recommended to conduct an adaptation or re-evaluation to the active learning methodology that has been used all these times in order to be more practical and appropriate with Indonesian classroom contexts.

Keywords: Implementation, English, active learning pedagogy, Aceh.

*Corresponding author, email: merinadevira.fkip@unsam.ac.id

Citation in APA style: Devira, M. (2020). Revisiting the implementation of Active Learning Pedagogy in EFL classrooms. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 7(1), 223-236.

Received November 28, 2019; Revised January 24, 2020; Accepted January 29, 2020

<https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v7i1.15089>

©Universitas Syiah Kuala. All rights reserved.

1. INTRODUCTION

Aceh is one of the provinces in Indonesia located at the western end of Indonesian archipelago and still struggling to improve the quality of education. There have been many serious efforts to be taken in order to encourage a better position of Aceh's education quality, particularly after a conflict and tsunami disaster periods which damaged many education infrastructures and facilities in Aceh. Therefore, after these periods, Aceh government's efforts for the development of education quality were mainly focused at an access to education (facilities and infrastructures), a supply of teachers, and a quality of teaching practices, mainly at the level of school education (Bahri Ys et al., 2011). A number of education programs were conducted massively in Aceh by coordinating with the Indonesian Government and International Organizations.

Aceh's educational system is regulated by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) of the central government in Jakarta, in coordination with the District Education Office or the District Office of Religious Affairs. One of the government efforts' which has been conducted in order to improve Aceh's education quality is active learning trainings programs for teachers in collaborating with non-government organizations. Aceh is one of seven other provinces which was equipped by the Managing Basic Education (MBE) program of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) with the project of Active, Creative, Joyful and Effective Learning (PAKEM) for elementary schools and Contextual Teaching and Learning for secondary schools (Bahri Ys et al., 2011; Sulastrri et al., 2011; Young, 2018). These two programs which had been conducted during a five-year effort (2005-2010) were not only to promote active learning as an effective teaching methodology but also to improve school management and role of school committee members (Bahri Ys et al., 2011; Sopantini, 2014).

After the Decentralized Basic Education 2 (DBE2) training and monitoring for both programs, there had been several studies analyzing the implementation of active learning system at the level of Aceh regional schools (Bahri Ys et al., 2011; Sulastrri et al., 2011). According to Niemi (2002) as cited in Bahri Ys et al. (2011), the impetus of doing analyses on these studies is that active teaching and learning pedagogies can be said as imported methods from western pedagogical thought which then be likely difficult to be implemented by local teachers in their classrooms and even for teachers in developed societies. Consequently, at that time, understanding the obstacles faced by teachers in implementing active learning in their classrooms became the objective of those researches in order to provide additional support to help teachers and schools in building an active learning atmosphere.

However, none of previous research studies regarding the implementation of active learning in Aceh precisely focused on the specific subject of English. In addition, it needs another research that can revisit how active learning is being implemented at schools in Aceh after eight years of the government's project coordinating with the USAID DBE2 program that provides much significant trainings on active learning methodology to the secondary school communities in Aceh. Based on these reasons, there is a need to investigate the current situation of active learning pedagogy implementation for English subject at several high schools in eastern Aceh. The significance of this study is to provide preliminary data about the development of active learning pedagogy implementation on English language teaching in Aceh after

an eight-year USAID DBE2 program. In light of this objective, the following questions were formulated:

1. In eastern Aceh high school classroom context, how has an English-active learning pedagogy been implemented at the classrooms?
2. What factors do influence the implementation of English-active learning pedagogy at Aceh high school classrooms?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Active Learning Pedagogy

The concept of active learning is identified in terms of both of the definitions and characteristics based on various studies conducted in the area of active learning pedagogy. In the study by Young (2018), the definition and principle of active learning or student-centered approach are conceptualized into an Indonesian curriculum framework, namely *Pembelajaran Aktif, Kreatif, Efektif, dan Menyenangkan* (PAKEM) or ‘Active, Creative, Effective and Joyful Learning’ at the education level of elementary schools (*Sekolah Dasar*) and ‘Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL)’ at the level of junior secondary school (*Sekolah Menengah Pertama*) and senior secondary school (*Sekolah Menengah Atas*). According to Young (2018, p. 11), these curriculum frameworks promotes the learning principles about ‘learning by discovery, creativity, and analytical and critical thinking’. The teaching-learning methods described in this study integrate the western pedagogical thought, such as participating in an individual/group project, a group discussion, independent learning, creating journals and portfolios, and the traditional methods such as ‘lecture listening, note-taking, recitation, and paper-based exercises’. Hence, in a view of Indonesian policy according to UNESCO in 2008 (Young, 2018), the implementation of active learning methods at the classrooms should accompany or replace the traditional methods and its realization depends on the school contexts including the school curriculum, also teachers’ readiness in designing the syllabus and executing it into the classroom practices, and community.

According to Millis (2012) as cited in Badroeni (2018), John Dewey and other educators also confirmed that active learning pedagogy is considered to be a significant component in the language teaching field and it is used interchangeably by the term of ‘learner centered’ or ‘learning-centered’. They explained that active learning can be defined as a teaching method which aims to enable the students to be both as an initiator in doing a meaningful action and a developer in developing their skill through their learning process. Hackathorn et al. (2011) as cited in Badroeni (2018) state that during students’ learning, the teachers act as a facilitator and should create the learning atmosphere to be dynamic by engaging the students to some learning activities, such as demonstrations, structured activities, small group discussions, quizzes, interactive lecture cues, videos, humorous stories, taking field trips, and games. A systematic approach for creating active learning in the classroom was also proposed by Auster and Wylie (2006). The conceptual framework offered in this study is an expansion of many important literatures (Auster & Wylie, 2006; Bonwell & Eison, 1991; Keyser, 2000; McKeachie, 1999; Meyers & Jones, 1993; Silberman, 1996; Sopantini, 2014) regarding active learning integrated into one framework as a vehicle for management

educators to create active learning in the business school classroom. The framework proposes four dimensions of the teaching processes that can be optimized in order to create active learning, consisting of: “context setting, class preparation, class delivery, and continuous improvement” (Auster & Wylie, 2006, p. 335). At each dimension, there are specific action steps and implementation tips that can be applied by lecturers to create active learning. Even though the action steps at each dimension are different, each dimension is related and reinforced to each other in order to build an active learning atmosphere (Auster & Wylie, 2006).

Meanwhile, in a prior study conducted by Bahri Ys et al. (2011), the principles of active learning pedagogy were ordered in a structured way by referring to the constructivist learning theory of Vygotsky, Piaget and Keyser (Bahri Ys et al., 2011, p. 72), such as: (1) students are involved in more than listening in the classroom, (2) there is a greater emphasis on the development of skills rather than the simple transmission of information, (3) students are engaged in a variety of activities, and (4) students learn to think about the way they learn.

These principles were also supported by Courtney (2008), as cited in Biase (2009), stating that active learning has been in line with the constructivist theory viewing that interpreting learning experiences by the learners is quite important to construct their understanding in learning. Classroom activities should promote the students into a collaborative learning which aims to help learners solve the complex and authentic tasks, and the teachers act as a facilitator to monitor and scaffold the learners during their involvement on learning. According to Bonwell and Eison (1991), as cited in Sopantini (2014), the complex task requires students’ high engagement in a longer duration in order to complete the task and needs the teachers’ carefully planned design to the activities.

2.2 Challenges of Active Learning Implementation in Indonesia

There have been several current works on the implementation of active learning methods, especially focusing on the challenges or inconsistencies of active learning implementation in Indonesia. This work analyses the challenges or factors in creating active learning pedagogy through several major themes reinforced by theories. For example, in a study conducted by Young (2018) in English Education Program of Banten University, Indonesia, specific challenges that influence English teacher preparation and the teachers’ knowledge on PAKEM and CTL active learning methods by referring to Ginsburg (2010) study were analyzed.. This study provides an acknowledgement by the participants of study, including lecturers, teachers and students, that the matter of teachers’ understanding and using on active learning methods is very complex.

Even though, active learning pedagogy concept has been introduced and disseminated, there are still many cases showing that the teachers mistranslate the principles of active learning pedagogy into their classroom practices. This case was also confirmed by Sopantini (2014) explaining that most of individual teachers, schools, and principals in Indonesia have been lost in translating the active learning terms into their teaching practices since they defined the term based on their own understanding and not on the basis of what the experts thought. This case was also highlighted in their study as a great challenge in order to create active learning teaching practices in elementary school classrooms of North Maluku, Indonesia. Similarly,

Biase (2009) articulates that a significant problem in the process of implementing active learning effectively is to assure the stakeholders' understanding on the basic concept of active learning. Other studies in Africa also showed that a limited understanding of active learning was experienced by the teachers there, which caused a tendency for their teachers to only focus on creating a 'child-friendly' school assumed to be in line with the literal definition of active learning. Indeed, to be consistent with the notion of active learning, engaging the students into an enjoyable learning atmosphere is not enough but the teachers should challenge the students with the complex tasks. Therefore, reinforcing the executors' understanding, like teachers and school leaders regarding effective activities of active learning implementation is always emphasized in each of the study in order to create the student-centered pedagogy in Indonesian classrooms (Biase, 2009; Sopantini, 2014; Young, 2018).

Another important research relates to the challenge of active learning implementation in Indonesian classrooms was also conducted at two different senior high schools in Aceh with different contexts respectively. By using a qualitative method and a framework of multiple dimensions on active learning process by Auster and Wylie (2006), Fadlia et al. (2017) summarize the challenges experienced by English teachers at the rural and urban senior high schools into five themes, including: (1) a lack of teachers' understanding on a holistic concept of active learning, (2) less intention by teachers to build students' understanding and language acquisition on English language learning, (3) a lack of school facilities to support the implementation of active learning method in the classroom, such as no audio-visual media installed at the class, (4) less provided teaching training for school teachers, and (5) mix ability class. The themes resulted as challenges in this study were also found in other previous studies conducted in Aceh (Bahri Ys et al., 2011; Sulastri et al., 2011). The results of the research by Bahri Ys et al. (2011) and (Sulastri et al., 2011) show that even though the school system executors, such as teachers, principals, and school committee have gained a significant exposure to the active learning-teaching practices through trainings, the matters of their understanding on the active learning concept and their strong commitment to its implementation still need to be resolved. Hence, they emphasize that the adoption of active learning is not easy and fast and it needs a change on school culture and a cooperative collaboration among teachers, principals, and school committee in constructing the concept of active learning on teachers' teaching.

3. METHODS

This qualitative study was conducted in Langsa, Aceh, Indonesia, which aims to investigate the current situation of active learning pedagogy implementation on the English subject at high school classrooms and to find out the factors influencing the teachers in implementing active learning pedagogy practices in English as Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms.

3.1 Participants

To achieve the objective of this study, this research involved three state high schools located in Langsa and those schools referred to the 2013 Curriculum for their teaching-learning instructions. The school selection included a mix of urban and

remote schools with two different conditions. A senior high school located in the urban area (School 1) has more certified teachers and education facilities while the two other schools in the remote area (School 2 and School 3) present less certified teachers and education facilities. The participants of this study were four certified English teachers, including one teacher (Teacher 1) of School 1, one teacher of School 2 (Teacher 2) and the two others from School 3 (as Teacher 3 and Teacher 4), and the students in English subject classes of the eleventh grade. The different selection in terms of the number of teacher participants in this study was caused by the availability of teachers' teaching hours at the end period of semester at the schools. As a consequence, there was only one teacher participant from each of the schools (School 2 and School 3) that had not yet completed English subject teaching hours and could be selected as the samples.

3.2 Instruments

This present study employed two types of main instruments: observations and interviews. Observations as a non-participant were conducted for each lesson in order to examine how active learning pedagogy practices were implemented by English teachers in the classrooms. Multiple observations were carried out by using the tools, such as the observation checklist sheets and camera pictures to capture the teaching-learning practices at the classrooms in detail. The observation sheet is developed based from the dimension of active learning-teaching processes implemented in the classrooms, known as class delivery dimension (Auster & Wylie, 2006) and from other previous works on active learning pedagogy characteristics (Biase, 2009; Sopantini, 2014). There were three elements of active teaching-learning practices included in the observation sheets: the teachers' role, the students' engagement, and activities.

Further, to investigate English teachers' understanding and challenges on active learning implementation, semi-structured interviews with the teacher participants were also undertaken. The theoretical framework used in developing the interview questions referred to similar theories employed for observation checklist sheets and from other previous studies about the challenges of active learning implementation. In the interview sessions, the researcher prepared the questions which guided an interviewing to capture a greater detail explanation from the participants. The lesson plan reviews were administered to build the researcher's deeper understanding on the research problems.

3.3 Procedure

Before conducting observations at each lesson, a conversation with the teacher participants was conducted to ask for the teacher participant's permission and to explain the procedures of classroom observations. Further, the classroom observation was undertaken for one full lesson, around 2x45 minutes, at each school. The classroom observations were conducted in four cycles of teaching-learning processes, including: Cycle 1 – Preparation (Pre-Teaching, Apperception), Cycle 2 – Teaching, Cycle 3 – Students' Practice, and Cycle 4 – Teachers' Conclusion/Feedback.

After conducting observations, one-to-one interview with the teacher participants were undertaken. The nature of interviews was informal and conversational. The interview lasted at the teacher's room for about 10-15 minutes to

explore their understanding on active learning pedagogy and experience in classroom teaching-learning practices. The conversations were recorded by using a recorder and then transcribed to highlight the important information. Finally, the reviews on teachers' lesson plans were conducted to support information gained from observations and interviews.

4. RESULTS

This section presents the results of the study acquired from the main data sources: classroom observations and interviews with school English teachers, and lesson plan reviews. These provided the findings on an attempt to investigate the current development of English-active learning implementation in Aceh high school classrooms and the challenges faced by the teachers.

4.1 English-Active Learning Pedagogy Implementation in Classrooms

The observations were conducted for four full lessons at three sampled schools which included three learning cycles 'Preparation, Teaching, and Concluding'. The observations were analyzed based on active learning principles which focused on class delivery, the dimension of active learning-teaching processes implemented in the classrooms (Auster & Wylie, 2006) and adaptation from other previous works on active learning pedagogy characteristics (Bahri Ys et al., 2011; Biase, 2009; Sopantini, 2014). Based on the analysis of four detailed class observations by using a classroom observation checklist, two following main features were emerged: (1) the dominant of teachers' roles played at the classrooms could not be construed as the most likely active learning principles, and (2) the majority of students' engagement in the learning process was not yet incorporated as active learning characteristics.

4.1.1 Teachers' role in the classrooms

There are four features observed at four observed lessons in the eleventh grade. First, in relation to the use of gesture, movement and voice modulation, the teachers' (T1, T2, T3, and T4) voice were loud during the lessons and they kept adjusting the tone (high and low) when asking for students' responses and making their English pronunciation to be clear. The teachers (T2, T3 and T4) dominantly used Indonesian as a language instruction at the classrooms although sometimes they tried to mix with English since their students' English ability was varied. Meanwhile, in teacher T1's lesson, English was the dominant language use delivered all time during the lesson because the lesson took place at the 'most outstanding' class with selected best students of eleventh graders. In delivering the content of lesson topic and managing the students' interaction, it can be said that the teachers (T1, T2, T3, and T4) used less movement and gesture but had much relying on the use of voice, whiteboard writing, and teaching media (textbook and printed materials) in front of the class rather than approaching or monitoring the individual student or groups' needs.

Secondly, in terms of teachers' carefully planned design activities, three teachers (T1, T3, and T4), except T2, did a well preparation for their class teaching practices that can be seen from their lesson plans, organized teaching-learning classroom cycles

at that lesson, and well-prepared teaching media. The findings showed that their real class teaching practices were in line with the cycles designed in the lesson plans: Cycle 1 – Preparation (Pre-Teaching, Apperception), Cycle 2 – Teaching, Cycle 3 – Students’ Practice, and Cycle 4 – Teachers’ Conclusion/Feedback. These three teachers were able to design varied activities in each of ‘the teaching and students’ practice cycle’ and interconnected to each other during a forty five-minute lesson. For example, after the Teaching Cycle, the teachers explained the concept by using a whiteboard and a textbook in front of the class. Each teacher tried to manage the students into different activities in order to build more understanding on the concepts being learned. For example, drilling, answering questions on the task, filling the blanks, a dialogue performance, a discussion for a role-play performance were a set of activities implemented by T1 for building students’ understanding on ‘sad expressions’.

Meanwhile, in addition to the concept explanation of ‘be and pronoun’ and the use of a textbook, T3 made use of a poster in motivating the students’ to engage in grammar practices, such as a grammar exercise and a dialogue practice to describe a picture. T4 also performed several designed activities at the class, such as a listening task downloaded from the internet accompanied by a portable speaker and a dialogue performance. On the other hand, T2, for all the time of lesson (45 minutes), she only asked for each group to read the dialogues that had been completed previously as an assignment by the two-person group while the other students were walking, sitting, talking in a group and did not pay attention to the other’s group performances.

However, based on the class observations, all designed activities seemed not to be effectively implemented by the teachers because they found difficulties to manage the students into learning interactions. The classes had a big number of students and were quite noisy, and most of students were less focused on the teachers’ explanation and their classmates’ performance. As a consequence, there were only several groups (students) who actively worked in their learning activities. The teachers’ initiations to return the students’ concentration and track their understanding to the learning activities were limited to only several short questions, such as: “Do you understand/Do you have any questions?/Have you finished?”, which needed a single word response by students with a loud chant. These teachers’ questions seemed to fail to encourage the individual students to actively engage in the designed activities.

4.1.2 Students’ engagement in the classrooms

In four lessons observed, there was only one lesson with T1 that were able to engage the students to the varied activities with a different challenge. In this lesson, the students were not only engaged with the common practices, such as drilling, answering questions, fill in the blanks, a dialogue practice but the students were also challenged to have a group discussion in order to construct a role-play about ‘sad expressions’. Meanwhile, for the other lessons (by T2, T3, and T4), the activities were very common, such as a grammar exercise, filling the blanks, and a dialogue practice and these did not challenge the students to do more exploration on their learning. As a consequence, the students’ role at these lessons was only to receive information. Finally, the summary of classroom observation results regarding the teacher participants’ teaching practices in a view of active learning dimension by [Auster and Wylie \(2006\)](#) is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Results of classroom observations.

Active Learning Dimension: Class Delivery	School 1	School 2	School 3	
	T1	T2	T3	T4
I. Teachers' Role:				
a. The use of gesture, movement and voice modulation.	✓	×	✓	✓
b. The teachers' carefully planned design activities.	✓	×	✓	✓
c. To manage and encourage students' participation effectively.	✓	×	×	✓
d. The use of teachers questioning.	✓ In apperception	×	✓ In apperception	✓ In a conclusion drawing
II. Students' Engagement:				
a. The students are engaged in a variety of activities.	✓	×	×	×
b. Doing more exploration rather than receiving the transmission of information.	✓	×	×	×
c. Doing complex tasks in a longer duration.	✓	×	×	×
d. The students are involved in more than listening in the classrooms.	✓	×	✓	✓
f. The students' drawing conclusion.	✓	×	×	×
III. Activities	- drilling - answering questions on the tasks - fill in the blanks - a dialogue performance - discussion - role-play	- a dialogue practicing	- a grammar task - a dialogue practicing	- a listening task - a dialogue practicing

4.2 Factors in Implementing English-Active Learning Pedagogy

As confirmed by interviews and observations, there were several main themes that impeded the implementation of active learning in English subject classes, which included: (1) a lack of English teachers' understanding on the concept of active

learning pedagogy, (2) less provided trainings on active learning pedagogy, and (3) no provision of teaching-learning media at classrooms.

In terms of English teachers' understanding, the teacher participants responded the interview questions regarding the teachers' familiarity with the term of active learning pedagogy by confirming that they were quite friendly with the term of active learning pedagogy but not with the characteristics of active learning pedagogy. In terms of the use of active learning pedagogy within the curriculum, the teachers mentioned that the active learning pedagogy was more emphasized in the 2013 Curriculum rather than in the previous curriculum, KTSP (*Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan*, or Education Unit Level Curriculum). However, regarding an access to information, the teacher participants explained that the concept of active learning pedagogy was not well completely delivered in the English-Subject Discussion Forum (*Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran* or MGMP) since there were no invited experts or trainers on English language teaching training because of financial issues. As a result, the forum's activities mostly focused on the procedures of students' report card completion and a two-semester lesson plan design among the members of the forum. Inevitably, the teachers admitted that these conditions affected them to have much relying on using their own teaching experiences rather than recently informed pedagogical theories for their classroom teaching.

Further, the teachers explained that the school's support like the teaching media or facilities in implementing English-active learning pedagogy was important. This opinion was also supported by the findings from the classroom observations. The findings showed that the classroom arrangement was still in a traditional way, in which the chairs and desks were set in the row facing the whiteboard and the teachers' desk. This arrangement was not effective and efficient when the teachers initiated to design the activity of a group work (collaborative learning). Also, the teaching aids such as, wall charts, posters, realia, and audio-visual based media were not displayed and provided in the classrooms so that English language exposure seemed difficult to be promoted by the teachers during the lessons. To anticipate this challenge, T4 initiated to bring her own laptop and portable sound speaker into the classroom to teach the listening topics. Occasionally, other teachers such as T2 and T4 asked for their students to listen the YouTube videos outside of class and to report them in the next lesson. Even though the language laboratory and the audio-visual based media were provided at schools, these facilities were more frequently occupied and limited. Printed materials from internet and other textbooks were other resources more preferred by the teachers in designing the activities, such as games and dialogue practices in order to stimulate students' involvement and motivation on English language learning processes.

5. DISCUSSION

This present study was an investigation about a current development of an active learning pedagogy implementation in English language classrooms in Aceh. The findings of this study strongly support the results of previous studies (Bahri Ys et al., 2011; Biase, 2009; Fadlia et al., 2017; Sopantini, 2014; Sulastris et al., 2011; Van Der Werf et al., 2000; Young, 2018), which concluded that classroom interactions performed by teachers and students were mostly teacher-centered approach. The

previous studies' findings were in line with the classroom realities found in this present study. The teacher participants in this study still acted as a controller and played the roles 'from teacher to students'. A series of activities like drilling, filling the blanks, grammar exercise, and a dialogue performance looked much monotonous and dictated and failed to provide opportunities for students to use their higher order thinking skills as one of the characteristics in an active learning pedagogy. As explained by other experts in the previous researches (Auster & Wylie, 2006; Biase, 2009; Bonwell & Eison, 1991; Sopantini, 2014), the focus of active learning pedagogy is to provide intellectual tasks which aim to challenge the students not only to receive knowledge or information but also to create their understanding on new concept and improve their skills through active explorations.

However, the role-play activity designed by T1 has successfully encouraged the students to do more explorations about the topic of lesson. In this activity, the students arranged their chairs by themselves in a four-person group to construct a short drama script about 'sad expressions'. During the discussion, the students mixed their languages between Indonesian and English. After the group discussion, most of the student groups performed a short drama in English confidentially. Referring to the theories by Biase (2009) and Auster and Wylie (2006), this activity aligned with the notion of active learning principles explaining that collaborative learning as part of active teaching methods where the students had opportunities to improve their knowledge, skills, and abilities by discussing, listening, reading, writing, and interpreting about the content of lesson. To implement the role-play method optimally, the type of teachers' questioning and the teachers' role during student groups' discussion also should be highlighted in order to make all students actively engage with the activity. The teachers should act as a facilitator and perform more gestures and movements during the lessons which aim to keep monitoring, approaching, and helping the students' needs (Auster & Wylie, 2006). Further, the teachers' questions addressed should trigger the students' higher order thinking with a deeper understanding on the concepts being learned (Sopantini, 2014). As stated by Kalantari (2009), 'questioning technique' is one of the significant strategies that can be used to build a classroom interaction for a language learning. This technique will allow the language learners to act as a language initiator although a variety of media are not provided to encourage their speaking. He believed that activating the students to formulate and answer questions requiring a negotiation of meaning will provide a continuous interaction that help to improve the students' language proficiency.

Further, the second research question of the present study identified the factors which influenced the implementation of English-active learning pedagogy at classrooms. The results informed that the main factor in building English active teaching-learning practices was the teachers' understanding on the holistic concept of active learning pedagogy. The teachers' interpretation and understanding on this pedagogy were locked at the use of varied teaching media. They translated active learning pedagogy into a limited systematic approach that only could be activated through playing games, watching a video, and using interesting materials. They did not seem understand about the complex and systematic principles of active learning pedagogy that can be counted as a driver for the approach itself. Indeed, according to Frenzel et al. (2007), as cited in Ubit (2017), to build a classroom learning atmosphere is not only about the facilities or materials needed for learning, but involves more teaching learning practices undertaken among classroom participants. The teachers'

less understanding on active learning methods was also highlighted as the main problem in the previous researches conducted in EFL speaking countries (Bahri Ys et al., 2011; Biase, 2009; Fadlia et al., 2017; Sopantini, 2014; Sulastri et al., 2011; Young, 2018). Overall, the studies provided significant information that the teachers' readiness in executing the holistic system of active learning approach at the classrooms has still become a main, challenging task not only at the context of elementary schools (Sopantini, 2014) and secondary schools (Bahri Ys et al., 2011; Biase, 2009; Sulastri et al., 2011), but also at higher educational contexts (Young, 2018).

Another factor as finding in this study concentrated on less provided trainings received by the teachers on active learning methods although they actively engaged in English Subject Discussion Forum (*Musyawah Guru Mata Pelajaran* or MGMP). This issue indeed could be resolved by the support of schools' policy system to coordinate with English Education Department of a particular university for conducting a mutual collaboration, like a teaching training program. As explained by Van Der Werf et al. (2000) based on their study conducted in Indonesia, malpractice of active learning implementation in the classrooms was mostly caused by inadequate and ineffective trainings about active learning method. Moreover, there were many cases in Indonesia that even after much exposure on active learning trainings, the teachers' understanding was still inadequate to build active teaching-learning atmosphere at the classrooms (Bahri Ys et al., 2011; Sulastri et al., 2011; Van Der Werf et al., 2000). Therefore, Van Der Werf et al. (2000) explained that the school's local policy was required in order to support active learning implementation effectively at schools, which encompassed not only the provision of media and textbooks but also the trainings on how the media and textbooks should be utilized effectively for the teaching and learning processes. To anticipate the issue of less provided trainings on active learning methodology, Desimone (2009) as cited in Ubit (2017), recommended an idea that the teachers' knowledge, skills, and pedagogical practices can be improved not only through training programs, but also through their teaching experiences at schools, such as informal discussion with other teachers, seminars, and teacher study group.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this present study, it was concluded that the pedagogical practices implemented by English teachers in Aceh high school classrooms, especially in Langsa, were not yet construed as active learning pedagogy principles. The factors which impeded the implementation of active learning methods in the classrooms, including: (1) a lack of teachers' understanding on the holistic concept of active learning pedagogy, (2) less provided trainings on active learning pedagogy, and (3) no teaching-learning media provision at classrooms. The findings of this study were commensurate with what other previous researches resulted about active learning implementation in Indonesia that revealed teachers were not yet effectively implementing an active learning pedagogy in their classrooms and their teaching practices were still traditional and teacher-centered. Teachers' readiness on the concept of active learning pedagogy principles became the most influential factor in implementing the active learning pedagogy.

Nevertheless, some limitations of this study, such as a short period of conducting the research, a small number of school and participant selection, and less reviewed documents could be a basis to guide other researchers to conduct further studies in the area. It is suggested to conduct a more comprehensive study for evaluating an active learning pedagogy implementation in terms of its effectiveness and practicality to Indonesian classroom contexts by involving more research participants, schools, curriculum documents, and education policy makers.

REFERENCES

- Auster, R. E., & Wylie, K. K. (2006). Creating active learning in the classroom: A systematic approach. *Journal of Management Education*, 30(2), 333-353.
- Badroeni. (2018). Improving students' motivation in speaking English through active learning strategy. *Research and Innovation in Language Learning*, 1(2), 76-88.
- Bahri Ys, S., Mara, M. N., Yamin, M., B., S. A., & Dhin, C. N. (2011). Action research on the implementation of active learning at an Elementary school in Aceh. *Excellence in Higher Education*, 2(2), 70-78.
- Biase, D. R. (2009). Implementing active learning reform in the Maldives. *International Journal of Education Reform*, 18(4), 282-298.
- Bonwell, C. C., & Eison, J. A. (1991). Active learning: Creating excitement in the classroom. *ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report*. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED336049>
- Courtney, J. (2008). Do monitoring and evaluation tools, designed to measure the improvement in the quality of primary education, constrain or enhance educational development? *International Journal of Educational Development*, 28(5), 546-559.
- Desimone, L. M. (2009). Improving impact studies of teachers' professional development: Toward better conceptualizations and measures. *Educational Researcher*, 38, 181-200.
- Fadlia, Devira, M., & Chairuddin. (2017). Pembelajaran aktif bahasa Inggris: Tantangan pelaksanaan dan budaya [Active learning English: Implementation and cultural challenges]. *Jurnal Seunubok Lada*, 4(2), 77-87.
- Frenzel, A. C., Thrash, T. D., Pekrun, R., & Goetz, T. (2007). Achievement emotions in Germany and China: A cross-cultural validation of the academic emotions questionnaire-mathematics. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 38, 302-309.
- Ginsburg, M. (2010). Improving educational quality through active-learning pedagogies: A comparison of five case studies. *Educational Researcher*, 1(3), 62-74.
- Hackathorn, J., Solomon, E. D., Blankmeyer, K. L., Tennial, R. E., & Garczynski, A. M. (2011). Learning by doing: An empirical study of active teaching techniques. *Journal of Effective Teaching*, 11(2), 40-54.
- Kalantari, R. (2009). Techniques for classroom interaction. *International Journal of Language Studies*, 3(4), 425-434.
- Keyser, M. (2000). Active Learning and Cooperative Learning: Understanding the difference and using both styles effectively. *Research Strategies*, 17(1), 35-44.

- McKeachie, W. J. (1999). *Teaching tips: Strategies, research and theory for college and university teachers*. Houghton Mifflin.
- Meyers, C., & Jones, T. B. (1993). *Promoting active learning: Strategies for the college class-room*. Jossey-Bass.
- Millis, B. J. (2012). Active Learning Strategies in Face-to-Face Courses. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED565290.pdf>
- Niemi, H. (2002). Active learning—a cultural change needed in teacher education and schools. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 18, 763–780
- Silberman, M. L. (1996). *Active learning*. Allyn and Bacon.
- Sopantini. (2014). *Reforming teaching practice in Indonesia: A case study of the implementation in primary schools in North Maluku*. (Master's thesis). University of Tasmania, Tasmania.
- Sulastri, S. M., Fitri, Y., Yani, B., Adlim, Qurnati, T., Nursalmi, Idris, T., & Sabarni. (2011). Action research on the implementation of teaching for active learning in two Elementary Madrasahs in Aceh. *Excellence in Higher Education*, 2(2), 79-89.
- Ubit, F. (2017). *A review of effective teacher professional development* [Paper presentation]. Proceedings of the 1st National Conference on Teachers' Professional Development 2017, Banda Aceh.
- Van Der Werf, G., Creemers, B., De Jong, R., & Klaver, E. (2000). Evaluation of school improvement through an educational effectiveness model: The case of Indonesia's PEQIP Project. *Comparative Education Review*, 44(3), 329-355.
- Young, S. (2018). Indonesia's active, creative, effective and joyful learning from a university teacher training program to high school classrooms. *Indonesian Research Journal in Education*, 2(1), 7-31.