



Teacher's Pedagogical Competence in Teaching English In Secondary School

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-04-20 Revised: 2026-06-30 Accepted: 2026-06-30 Keywords: classroom interaction, English teaching pedagogical competence, secondary school, student perception DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i1.10357 Corresponding Author: Muhammad Nur Khamid hamiedmuh77@gmail.com Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Muhammadiyah Purworejo, Jawa Tengah	<i>This research aimed to analyze the pedagogical competence of English teachers, focusing on lesson planning and classroom implementation. Although pedagogical competence is widely recognized as a key factor in effective English language teaching, limited studies have examined its implementation in Islamic junior high schools, particularly by integrating both teacher and student perspectives. This research employed a qualitative design involving two English teachers and 52 eighth-grade students at MTs Al-Iman Bulus. The data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. They changed their teaching materials. Used different ways to engage students, like games, videos, and group tasks. Students liked these approaches: the friendly classroom environment, fair grading, and clear explanations. The students gave ratings with the classroom atmosphere (3.63), fair assessment (3.58), and clear explanations (3.56). However, teachers still faced challenges, like students having varying skill levels, not enough time, and some students lacking motivation. To overcome these, teachers used teaching methods that helped all students and activities that encouraged participation. Teachers adapted their teaching to meet the needs of all students and used activities. The results show that good teaching skills are really important for making classroom learning work and keeping students interested. Teachers need to keep trying to give feedback and use teaching tools in the right way. This research is helpful for English teachers at MTs Al-Iman Bulus and other similar Islamic junior high schools. It gives them ideas on how to make their teaching help students who are different and get students to take part in class. The results of this research can also help schools and educators come up with plans to make English language teaching and learning better.</i>

1. Introduction

In the last couple of years, the increasing incidence of English usage in both the academic and professional contexts worldwide has made its significance in the education sector even more prominent. In addition, English teaching and learning aim to equip students with the knowledge and skills to communicate and engage in the community at the global level (Dzulkifli Isadaud et al., 2022). However, prioritizing classroom learning processes supports English language improvement and learning, as language acquisition and student engagement are influenced by classroom interactions and effective teaching quality (An et al., 2021). English as an international language and a means of communication, language and communication, and education are taught as subjects in secondary schools.

In Indonesia, students in junior secondary schools are taught English as a compulsory subject; however, many find it very difficult to understand the teaching and learning materials and to contribute to classroom discussions (Gea et al., 2024). Students typically struggle with this because they lack the language necessary to fully engage in class discussions, have poor self-esteem, and seldom engage in meaningful classroom interactions. The success of English learning is not merely a function of students' abilities; it also depends on the teachers' careful planning and execution of the learning activities, as well as their ability to create engaging and student-centered learning environments (Fredricks, 2023)

The quality of learning in the classroom can be assessed in terms of the role of pedagogical competence. Pedagogical competence is the teacher's ability to identify student characteristics, articulate the desired learning objectives, choose material and methods, handle classroom processes, and assess learning (Ilhan Gunbayi, 2023). Moreover, a teacher with strong pedagogical competence is likely to foster an interactive and meaningful learning atmosphere, and in turn, stimulate students to participate actively (Rahmandani et al., 2025). (König et al. 2022) contend that the academic success and student engagement of students are significantly impacted by the pedagogical competence of educators.

In addition, the importance of pedagogical competence in achieving effective English language learning is emphasized in several studies published in the *Exposure: English Language Education Journal* (Gea et al., 2024). However, several aspects of pedagogical competence demonstrated by previous studies, particularly interactive teaching strategies and the application of learning approaches, have not always been optimally implemented in classroom practice (Djihhat et al., 2024). This shows a dissonance between pedagogical theory and the practice of learning.

However, although previous studies have highlighted the importance of pedagogical competence in improving teaching effectiveness and student engagement, most of them have focused on general concepts or broader educational settings. For instance, Rich (2021) discussed differentiated instruction as a way to address students' diverse learning needs, but the study paid more attention to the underlying principles than to how these strategies are applied in

everyday classroom practice. Likewise, Panadero et al. (2019) emphasized the value of formative assessment in supporting student learning, yet offered limited explanation of how assessment is implemented during classroom interactions. While these studies provide useful insights into pedagogical competence, they offer limited information about how teachers apply such competence in actual English language classrooms, particularly at the secondary school level.

Furthermore, few studies have explored pedagogical competence by considering both teachers' and students' perspectives within a specific educational context. This gap is particularly relevant in Islamic junior high schools (MTs), where teachers must address diverse student characteristics while balancing academic and religious learning environments. Therefore, this research investigates pedagogical competence at MTs Al-Iman Bulus through four dimensions: understanding students' characteristics, designing and implementing learning activities, evaluating learning outcomes, and developing students' potential.

Examining these dimensions may provide a more comprehensive understanding of how pedagogical competence is applied in English language teaching and classroom practice. Based on these considerations, this research focuses on examining the pedagogical competency of an English teacher instructing eighth-grade students at MTs Al-Iman Bulus in the 2025/2026 academic year, specifically in elements of lesson design and implementation. The main problems in this research are formulated as follows:

1. How does the teacher apply pedagogical competence in teaching English to the eighth-grade students in secondary school?
2. What pedagogical strategies does the teacher use to create effective learning interactions in the English classroom?

2. Method

Research Design

A qualitative research design was employed to assess the pedagogical proficiency of English teachers in instructing eighth-grade students, specifically class VIII at MTs Al-Iman Bulus during the 2025/2026 academic year. Qualitative research aims to analyze instructional strategies, classroom dynamics, and the application of pedagogical skills in genuine learning environments (Zhu et al., 2021). It was hard to measure pedagogical competence accurately just by looking at numbers, so this method was used because it was the best way to do it.

Two eighth grade English teachers and fifty-two students from two different classrooms served as the main and supporting participants, respectively, in this study. During the 2025–2026 school year, two teachers were chosen for their roles in designing, implementing, and evaluating English language arts programs for eighth graders. The students were invited to fill out a survey about their teacher's

teaching methods. The participating students were selected from the classes taught by these teachers to provide supporting information regarding their perceptions of the teachers' pedagogical competence.

These participants were considered representative of the school context because they were directly involved in the teaching and learning process under investigation. The location for this research was MTs Al-Iman Bulus, which was chosen because it had diverse student characteristics and the application of pedagogical strategies observed in English learning. The purposive sampling technique was used as a method because the selected subjects had met the criteria as the focus of the research.

To obtain students' perceptions of the teachers' pedagogical competence, the questionnaire was developed based on four dimensions of pedagogical competence: understanding students' characteristics, designing and implementing learning activities, evaluating learning outcomes, and developing students' potential. These dimensions served as the framework for assessing how pedagogical competence was demonstrated in the English classroom. Before its administration, the questionnaire was reviewed by an English education lecturer to ensure its relevance to the research objectives and the appropriateness of its content. The instrument was also examined for clarity and readability to ensure that all statements could be understood accurately by the participants.

Ethical considerations were observed throughout the research process. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the school administration. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and participated voluntarily. The identities of the teachers and students were kept confidential, and the collected data were used solely for research purposes.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques. The researcher applied several steps, namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. First, the data obtained from observation, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation were reduced by selecting relevant information related to pedagogical competence. Second, the data were displayed in the form of descriptive explanations and tables to facilitate understanding. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on patterns and themes found in the data. In addition, the questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to calculate the mean scores of students' responses.

Data Collection

To collect the data, the researcher used several research instruments, including observation, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. Observation is the systematic process of recording behavioral patterns of people, events, and occurrences as they naturally unfold (Takona, 2024) and it was

conducted to examine how the teacher taught, how students interacted, and how engaged they were during the lesson, supported by observation sheets and field notes.

Interviews, defined as a method of collecting data through direct interaction between the researcher and participants (Braun & Clarke, 2012) were conducted in a semi-structured form with English teachers to explore their pedagogical competence, including lesson planning, teaching strategies, classroom management, and evaluation of learning outcomes. In addition, a questionnaire was given to 52 students to gather their perceptions of the teacher's ability using four response options, as questionnaires are commonly used to examine respondents' opinions and attitudes (Taherdoost, 2022).

The questionnaire items were designed based on key indicators of pedagogical competence (Lee & Lee, 2022), focusing on classroom interaction, clarity of explanation, feedback, and learning support. Documentation was also used as supporting data by collecting materials such as lesson plans, teaching materials, teacher reflections, and classroom photos to strengthen the analysis of pedagogical competence in the teaching and learning process (Morgan, 2022).

3. Results

Classification of Teachers' Perceptions and Practices

Through the analysis method, several facts and findings were obtained through semi-structured interviews. The researcher classified perception based on teacher strategies, problems, and solutions. These findings are explained in the following table.

Table 1. Teacher responses toward pedagogical competence in secondary school

Perceptions	Coding results	Statements
Teacher's pedagogical competence	Understanding students' characteristics	"I adjust the materials and learning process based on students' abilities and their learning styles. For example, some students prefer visual learning through videos and PowerPoint, while others prefer game-based activities, so I adapt the lesson to match their preferences." (Teacher 1) "I design learning objectives and materials based on students' abilities because each class has a different level. Some students can produce simple texts well, while others still need simpler tasks to build their understanding." (Teacher 2) These responses indicate that both teachers attempt to adapt instruction to students' learning needs and classroom diversity.

Planning and executing instruction	“In designing learning, I follow the curriculum and MGMP guidelines, then adjust them to the material and students’ abilities. During implementation, I use interactive media, games, and quizzes to make the lesson more engaging and effective.” (Teacher 1) “I start the lesson with simple material and gradually move to more difficult content. I also involve students actively by giving them tasks, such as arranging words into sentences and developing them into a text.” (Teacher 2) Both teachers emphasized active participation and gradual learning progression to support students’ understanding.
Assessing learning outcomes	“Evaluation is conducted through several methods, such as observing students’ participation, giving written tests, and assessing their performance during discussions to see how well they understand the material.” (Teacher 1) “I evaluate students through formative assessments, daily tasks, and writing activities. For example, students write a text and answer questions based on it to measure their understanding.” (Teacher 2) Evaluation was not limited to written tests but also included classroom participation and performance-based tasks.
Developing students’ potential	“I use interactive media, games, and rewards to encourage students to participate actively. When students are interested and engaged, they become more confident and motivated to learn.” (Teacher 1) “I encourage students by giving tasks and asking questions related to their daily lives. This helps them express their ideas and gradually build their confidence in using English.” (Teacher 2) Various motivational strategies were used to encourage students to become more actively involved in classroom activities.

Problems	Differences in Students' Ability	"I need to adjust the material depending on the students' level. For higher-level students, I can explain all types of material, but for lower-level students, I often have to simplify it so they can understand the basic concepts." (Teacher 1) "One of the main challenges is the difference in students' abilities. Some students can follow the lesson well, but others still struggle, so I need to adjust the tasks and sometimes group them to help each other." (Teacher 2) Both teachers needed to adjust materials, tasks, and instructional approaches to ensure that students with different proficiency levels could participate effectively in the learning process.
	Limited Time in Teaching and Learning Process	"Time is one of the main challenges because preparing media and conducting interactive activities takes longer. It is difficult to combine games, explanations, and quizzes in one meeting, so sometimes I have to divide them into different sessions." (Teacher 1) "Limited time is also a challenge because I need to adjust the material and activities to fit the class duration, especially when students need more time to understand the lesson." (Teacher 2) Both teachers reported difficulties in balancing explanations, practice activities, and assessments within the available classroom time.
	Students' Low Motivation and Engagement	"Students tend to get bored easily, so I have to vary the teaching methods continuously. If the method is not interesting, students lose focus and become less active in the classroom." (Teacher 1) "Some students lack confidence in learning English, and they feel that English is difficult, especially because the pronunciation and spelling are different. This makes them less active during the lesson." (Teacher 2) Factors such as boredom, low confidence, and perceptions that English is difficult often reduced students' participation during classroom activities.

Solutions	Differentiated Instruction	“I adjust the level of the material depending on students’ abilities. For higher-level students, I can provide more complete material, while for lower-level students, I simplify the content so they can understand the basic concepts first.” (Teacher 1) “I usually group students with lower ability so they can work together and support each other. I also start from simple material and gradually move to more difficult content.” (Teacher 2) The findings indicate that learning materials and activities were adjusted according to students’ proficiency levels to ensure that all learners could participate meaningfully in the learning process.
	Time Management and Activity Adjustment	“Because time is limited, I sometimes divide the activities into different meetings. For example, one meeting focuses on explaining the material and games, while another meeting is used for quizzes or evaluation.” (Teacher 1) “I adjust the material and activities based on the available time. If students need more time to understand, I simplify the tasks so they can still follow the lesson within the time limit.” (Teacher 2) Some activities were distributed across multiple meetings to ensure that learning objectives could still be achieved.
	Interactive and Engaging Teaching Strategies	“I use interactive media, games, and ice-breaking activities to make students more interested. When students enjoy the lesson, they become more active and motivated to participate.” (Teacher 1) “I involve students actively by giving them tasks and asking questions related to their daily lives. This helps them feel more engaged and encourages them to participate in the learning process.” (Teacher 2) Interactive media, games, classroom questioning, and activities connected to students’ daily lives were used to encourage active involvement in learning.



Figure 1. Eighth-Grade Students



Figure 2. Eighth-Grade Students



Figure 3. Eighth-Grade Teacher



Figure 4. Eighth-Grade Teacher

Table 2. The Benefits and Challenges of Teacher Pedagogical Competence for Students

Perceptions	Statements	Mean
Benefits	The teacher explains English lessons clearly.	3,56
	The learning objectives are delivered at the beginning of the lesson.	3,50
	The learning materials are easy to understand.	3,29
	The teacher uses interesting teaching methods.	3,46
	The teacher encourages students to ask questions.	3,42
	The teacher gives students opportunities to participate actively.	3,50
	The teacher provides feedback on students' work.	3,19
	The teacher assesses students fairly.	3,58
	English learning helps me understand the material better.	3,38
	The teacher relates English material to students' daily lives.	3,44
	The teacher gives clear examples when explaining the material.	3,60
	The teacher creates a comfortable and conducive classroom atmosphere for learning.	3,63
	The teacher motivates students during the learning process.	3,48
	The teacher responds well to students' questions or opinions.	3,52
	The teacher helps students who have difficulties in understanding English material.	3,54
Challenges	The teacher manages learning time well.	3,42

The teacher explains the learning material according to students' ability levels.	3,54
The teacher uses media or technology in teaching English.	3,23
The teacher uses a variety of teaching methods so that students do not feel bored.	3,46
The teacher gives students opportunities to work individually as well as in groups.	3,63

Overall, students had positive views of their teachers' pedagogical competence. The classroom environment had a high average rating of 3.63. This demonstrates that students were comfortable and supported while learning. Opportunities to work individually and collaboratively obtained a rating of 3.63. This shows that they appreciated active class participation. Teachers' examples during lessons received a rating of 3.60. This suggests that students considered the explanations useful and easy to understand. These findings demonstrate that teachers set up a suitable atmosphere for learning.

However, there are still certain problems to address. Feedback provision received a lower mean score of 3.19, indicating that students expected more guidance all over their learning path. Similarly, the use of media and technology in teaching obtained a score of 3.23, suggesting that there is still room to enhance learning through more effective integration of instructional media and technological tools.

4. Discussion

Students' Perceptions of Teachers' Pedagogical Competence

The purpose of this research is to examine how secondary school English teachers apply their pedagogical competence, specifically in relation to the planning and implementation of lessons, and to determine the advantages and disadvantages that are seen by the students and the teachers themselves. Using semi-structured interviews and closed-ended questionnaires, this qualitative research delves deeply into the ways in which pedagogical competency is put into practice in real-life classroom settings.

Firstly, the findings indicate that understanding students' characteristics plays an important role in the implementation of pedagogical competence. Both teachers adapted instructional materials and learning activities according to students' abilities and learning preferences. This practice was reflected in students' positive perceptions regarding the suitability of learning materials to their ability levels (3.54), the connection between learning materials and daily life (3.44), and the clarity of explanations provided by the teacher (3.56).

The consistency between interview findings and students' responses suggests that attention to students' individual characteristics contributes to more effective learning experiences. These findings support the view that pedagogical competence significantly influences the quality of learning and students' academic development (König et al., 2020). Therefore, the first research question is addressed through evidence that pedagogical competence is demonstrated through teachers' ability to recognize student characteristics and adjust instruction accordingly.

Secondly, the results demonstrate that the teachers used a variety of interactive pedagogical approaches to foster engaging discussions amongst their students. Multimedia tools, games, discussions, and task-based activities were among the many instructional tactics used to get students involved. Results from the questionnaire corroborate this observation, showing that engaging teaching approaches (3.46), active engagement (3.50), a nice classroom environment (3.63), and student motivation (3.48) all received good marks. Student involvement is enhanced by interactive educational techniques, as indicated by the congruence of interview and questionnaire results.

The results are in line with the principles of constructivist learning theory, which highlights the significance of student engagement in the process of knowledge construction. Bygstad et al. (2022) found that students' cognitive and behavioral engagement is enhanced in active learning contexts, and this new research adds to that body of evidence. These findings answer the second research question by demonstrating that interactive media, game-based learning, and task-based activities were used to facilitate effective classroom interaction.

Thirdly, the findings show that assessments were carried out using a range of methods, such as class observation, participation monitoring, assignments, and written tests. Students generally rated the assessment procedure highly, as evidenced by their high fairness assessment (3.58). However, feedback provision obtained a lower grade (3.19), indicating that there are still chances to strengthen formative feedback practices. The combination of interview and questionnaire findings indicates that assessment was not only used to measure achievement but also to monitor students' learning progress.

The relatively low feedback score suggests that students might expect detailed feedback regarding their strengths, weaknesses and potential areas for improvements.

Without adequate feedback, students might find it difficult to identify learning gaps and regulate their own learning process. This finding supports previous research emphasizing that formative assessment and constructive feedback contribute significantly to student self-regulation and learning development (Panadero et al., 2022).

However, several challenges were identified in the implementation of pedagogical competence. Although students generally perceived classroom instruction positively, the interview findings revealed difficulties related to students' diverse abilities, instructional time management, and the use of learning media. Differences in students' abilities were a challenge for teachers. They had to help students with learning needs in the same classroom. Some students learned fast, while others took time.

As a result, teachers needed to continuously adjust instructional strategies to ensure that learning objectives could be achieved by all students. This finding is consistent with Tomlinson and Imbeau (2023), who argue that heterogeneous classrooms require differentiated instruction and flexible teaching approaches. Although time management received a positive mean (3.42), it was not as good as in some areas. Teachers had to balance activities and make the most of the limited time they had.

This was still a problem during teaching and learning. The much lower score (3.23) for media and technology use reflects practical constraints such as scheduling and classroom implementation. These findings imply that instructional effectiveness necessitates ongoing adaptability to a changing classroom environment and student requirements.

Time management emerged as another great deal of trouble. Although a relatively positive mean score (3.42) was obtained for time management, it remained lower than several other dimensions of pedagogical competence. Managing time during instruction is a complex challenge, particularly as teachers must balance explanations, practice, assessments, and student interactions within the constraints of limited class time. Effective time management goes beyond merely adhering to the lesson plan; it also requires making instructional decisions that maximize learning opportunities while maintaining student engagement.

In addition, the relatively low score for media and technology integration (3.23) suggests the presence of operational challenges, including time constraints, limited technological support, and insufficient instructional resources. This finding reinforces the view that pedagogical competence is a dynamic construct that requires teachers to continuously adjust their instructional practices in response to evolving classroom demands and contextual realities.

To address these challenges, several strategies were aligned by the teachers with the principles of pedagogical competence. Differentiated instruction was applied by adjusting learning activities and task difficulty according to students' abilities. Teachers also organized learning activities across different sessions to improve time management and ensure that instructional objectives could be achieved effectively.

In addition, interactive media, games, and real-life learning situations were used to keep students engaged and participating. The effectiveness of these strategies was reflected in students' positive perceptions, particularly regarding

opportunities for both individual and group work (3.63) and the overall classroom atmosphere. These findings indicate that adaptive pedagogical strategies can support teachers in responding effectively to diverse classroom situations while maintaining meaningful learning experiences.

Overall, the findings indicate that teachers were able to effectively apply pedagogical competence by recognizing students' characteristics, implementing interactive teaching strategies, conducting continuous assessment, and supporting students' learning development. The consistency of interview results and student questionnaire replies indicates that these strategies were well appreciated by students.

Although obstacles such as student diversity, time management, and the use of instructional technology persisted, teachers used a variety of adaptive ways to address these concerns. As a result, the findings not only address both study questions but also corroborate the notion that pedagogical competency is critical in building effective and engaging English learning environments in secondary school classes.

5. Conclusion

The English teachers at MTs Al-Iman Bulus showed generally good performance in teaching eighth-grade students. The teachers showed they understood what their students were like. They made plans to teach them based on those characteristics. They used fun ways to teach, like videos and games. The teachers did this to get the students involved in the class. The classroom then became a place to learn. It was more joyful and helped students learn. The teachers checked how the students were doing in ways like watching them and giving them tasks to do. They need to get better at telling the students how they are doing.

The teachers at MTs Al-Iman Bulus had some challenges when they were teaching. Some students were not as good as others. They did not have a lot of time to teach. Some students were also not very motivated. To overcome challenges, teachers tried teaching students at their own pace. They also made lessons more enjoyable.

This research helps to understand how teachers use their skills in a classroom. It is especially helpful for secondary schools, MTs Al-Iman Bulus. The research shows how teachers adapt to their students. They make learning fun and engaging. This research only looked at a few teachers and students. Further research should involve a larger number of teachers and students to gain a more comprehensive understanding of teaching practices across different schools. In addition, greater attention should be given to exploring pedagogical competence and how English teachers at MTs Al-Iman Bulus and other educational contexts can apply it effectively to support student learning.

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