
Teachers engaging primary school learners of English as a foreign language

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Abstract

To ensure learners are motivated, teachers need to be aware of the effect of their actions inside the classroom. One of the immediate aims of the language teaching process is to engage learners of English as a foreign language in their language learning. This study investigated the significance in Libyan primary public schools of the engagement activities that teachers use in their teaching practice. The qualitative methodology included making notes on a classroom observation chart by recording the sessions and using video or audio-stimulated recall in addition to interviews. Thematic analysis of the results revealed that teachers managed to engage the children with a range of activities in their teaching practice by creating situations in which the learners participated actively in many ways.

Keywords: English as a foreign language, engaging learners, teaching strategies.

Introduction

Engagement is "the attention, interest, investment, and effort students expend in the work of learning" (Marks, 2000, pp. 154-155). In an educational context, engagement is related to the effort and time students spend participating in educational activities in class (Kuh, 2009). In the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) classroom, teachers play an essential role in engaging learners using various types of activities, the most common being roleplay, information-gap activities, communication games, discussion, oral observation, jigsaw activities, and information transfer activities (Noori, 2018, p. 1053).

Teachers can predict student achievement and potential learning outcomes depending on engagement "as an indicator of their students' underlying motivation during instruction" (Reeve, Jang, Carrell, Jeon, & Barch, 2004, p. 148). If students are actively involved in classroom activities, they are more likely to be engaged and motivated in the learning process. Thus, it is beneficial for teachers to encourage students to be involved and engaged in classroom activities. Skinner, Furrer, Marchand, and Kindermann (2008), for example, conducted a study in elementary and middle schools in New York and found that children who

participated and worked hard in learning activities increased their feelings of fun and enjoyment. At the same time, children with lower participation rates in the classroom were more likely to feel bored and be less engaged in learning activities.

Literature review

The research shows a positive correlation between engagement and effective teaching methods inside the classroom. Success using Communicative Language Teaching approaches has occurred by enhancing the motivation of language learners by EFL teachers engaging them in a variety of activities and using motivational strategies in their classrooms. Children in the first years of learning English need a lot of aural, oral, and visual activities to enjoy learning the English language. Nikolov and Djigunović (2019) demonstrated that "games with physical movements, competitions accompanied by chanting rhymes and singing songs, total physical response activities, listening to stories in picture books, guessing games and short interactive roleplays" work well with children who have just started learning English (p. 15).

One of the practical activities in foreign language instruction is using authentic material for developing listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Allen (2017) claimed that using an authentic video as a way of communication is a common strategy in teaching a foreign language. Allen examined using authentic video as an instructional strategy for developing students' listening comprehension in a public school in North Carolina. Twenty-five participants learning Spanish as a foreign language participated in this study. The study was collected from student work, field notes, and a student survey. The results revealed that using authentic videos was an effective instructional strategy for assisting students to develop listening comprehension. Using authentic video also encouraged students to engage in the discussion made before and after watching the videos. Students benefitted from the teacher using this instructional strategy as they started to recognize new vocabulary, and their understanding of the videos increased.

Teachers can use many tools to engage learners in learning, such as pictures, songs, drawings, and flashcards. For example, the use of pictures attracts learners' attention, which in turn facilitates their learning. Studies conducted by Nikolov (2009), Rohman (2016), and Sholihah (2009) found that pictures play a significant role in assisting students in learning vocabulary. Sholihah (2009) explored the influences of using pictures in teaching English vocabulary to fifth-grade learners at SDN Tugu Jebres NO.120, Surakarta. The data collected through observing the class activities contain four steps: warming up, presentation, activities, and assessment. The findings showed the positive advantages of using pictures in teaching vocabulary for young learners: attract students' attention, improve their motivation, assist them to memorise words, and make activities more enjoyable.

Songs were also one of the practical tools in learning. Sharpe (2012) considered songs as a vital part of a child's life and incorporating the foreign language with the use of songs will facilitate learning. Sevik (2011) explored teachers' perspectives on the use of songs in teaching the English language to young learners in primary Turkish schools. 52 EFL teachers from 24 different schools participated in answering 18 questions in the questionnaire. Teachers ranked the questions using a five-point Likert scale (strongly agree- strongly disagree). The results

revealed that EFL teachers have strong beliefs about the effectiveness of using songs in teaching English to young learners.

Teachers around the world use a variety of activities to engage beginner learners in learning. A survey published by Garton, Copland, and Burns (2011, p. 12) investigated the significant pedagogies that primary school teachers use to activate young learners, aged 7-11, inside the classrooms. One hundred forty-four countries participated in this survey through a non-probability sample. The survey reported around 4,696 responses. This survey has given some insights about the activities that teachers use in primary schools. The findings reported that teachers use a variety of activities in primary English classrooms around the world. The most popular activity that used by the majority of teachers were listening to the CD or tape recorder with 73.5%. Traditional activities were also popular; repeating after the teacher 74%, reading aloud 70%, filling the gaps 64.8%, grammar exercises and children memorizing words 56%. Creative activities have frequently been used; for example, playing games 69.9%, and songs 66.9%. Roleplay was also used by the majority of English teachers, 60.8%. The most surprising findings were that some activities such as translation, creative writing children telling a story, computer work, watching TV/videos were reported as never or rarely used by teachers.

“Repeating words” was found to be a common strategy among teachers in different institutional schools in Korea, ranging from elementary to high school. One of the questions examined by Kim (2002) was finding out the strategies that 53 pre-service teachers used in their teaching of English as a Foreign Language. A questionnaire with open-ended questions was employed to collect quantitative data from participants in those different institutional contexts. The findings indicated that teachers, irrespective of the school group, considered the "repeating of words" as the most common strategy used. Elementary school teachers tended to use games and activities as a strategy to increase learners' motivation.

In Arab countries, teachers are aware of the importance of applying CLT in their English classrooms. A study by Khan, 2016, focused on the usefulness of CLT in an EFL context (Emirates). Khan examined teachers' perspectives on implementing CLT in English language classrooms. 43 EFL teachers teaching in different schools and colleges participated in this study. Data were collected through the online survey, internet observation and interaction with teachers. The findings found that 88% of teachers use the Communicative Language Teaching approach in English classrooms as they consider implementing this approach is useful (79%) for developing the four primary language skills. 70% of teachers confirm using activities in their classroom with learners demonstrating a positive response for conducting these activities (93%). Only 58% of teachers obtained pre-service training to use CLT, 72% of teachers believe their schools provide them with sufficient material, and 86% consider that applying CLT is more time-consuming when compared with the traditional methods.

However, Libya has not been listed in the countries in this survey; therefore, little is known in the literature about what happens in English primary classrooms (Pinter, 2017). There is a need to investigate the engagement activities and the techniques that are used by English language teachers in Arab countries like Libya, which has suffered many fluctuations in the teaching and learning of English over the decades.

Methodology

1 Participant and research site

The participants were six EFL teachers from schools who had experience range from three to 35 years in teaching in a variety of institutional contexts, from primary to secondary schools in Ajelat City, North West of Libya. A purposive sample was adopted, selecting teacher participants from twenty primary schools where students achieved the highest scores in the National Examination in 2017.

Data Collection:

Classroom observations included video stimulated recall or audio recordings and making notes using the observation chart were used to observe teachers. The participants had the option to choose the type of observation they preferred. The observed details of the six primary school teachers are summarised in table (1). Each teacher's observation was 40 minutes long. The researcher started the video at the beginning of the lesson, focusing on the interaction between teachers and learners and reporting any engagement activities used in the classroom. After finishing the observations, the researcher transcribed the audio and played the video recordings many times to ensure accurate observations and obtain more detailed information about the motivational strategies and engagement activities teachers used in their practice and reported any challenges teachers experienced while teaching the English language.

The interviews were conducted following the classroom observations. The interviews included both the stimulated recall and semi-structured interview questions. Six interviews were made with six primary teachers. Three teachers preferred the interviews to be conducted in Arabic (Samar, Marwa and Ahmed) and three preferred to be interviewed in English (Huda, Ali and Fatima) and the interview time per teacher ranged from 35 to 45 minutes.

Table 1: Participants observational details

Teacher name	M / F	Teaching Experience (years)	Date of first observation	Date of second observation	School Gender	N. Students	Observation notes on (Audio/ Video recall)
Samar	F	6	21/11/2018	22/11/2018	6	20	A
Marwa	F	8	25/11/2018	27/11/2018	5	22	V
Huda	F	12	27/11/2018	05/12/2018	5	21	V
Ali	M	3	23/12/2018	01/01/2019	5	25	V

Ahmed	M	16	01/01/2019	02/01/2019	6	19	V
Fatima	F	35	18/12/2018	-	6	23	V

Data analysis

The interview data were transcribed. Then, the observation and interview data were thematically analysed to ascertain the engagement activities used by teachers to motivate and engage learners in learning English. Thematic analysis (TA) is “a method for identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns of meaning ‘themes’ within qualitative data” (Clarke & Braun, 2017, p. 297). Then the data were coded and categorized manually, using different colours into themes and sub-themes.

Results

The observations of the six teachers demonstrated that they used activities by creating situations to engage the children in many ways. Table 2 outlines students’ engagement in teacher-led activities, identifying verbal and non-verbal communication. Samar is identified as (1), Marwa as (2), Huda as (3), Ali as (4), Ahmed as (5), and Fatima as (6) in referring to their use of tools.

Table 2: Students’ engagement in teacher-led activities

Teachers’ use of tools to engage learners	Teachers’ creation of learning activities	Observations of students’ responses	Timed activity in minutes
1. Verbal communication			
1.1. The use of digital, paper-based aids			
audio and visual aid (phone) (5)	Ahmed used his phone to show colours and asked students to name and spell the colour.	Students actively listened to the teacher, looked at the colour names, and spelled out the letters. Teacher: Can you spell green, please? Students: g-r-e-e-n	6
Digital projector (2,3)	Marwa asked students to listen to words and sounds and then to repeat them.	Students watched the screen and listened to the alphabet letters, sounds, and words pronounced by a native speaker. Students repeated and read the alphabet letters, sounds and word on the screen.	8

CD (2,3)	Huda played the CD to listen to the alphabet letters and how to pronounce them.	Time spent on task demonstrated by active listening. Students listened to the CD of alphabet letters; they repeated the alphabet letters and words in unison.	4
Pictures (1,2,3,5)	Ahmed used pictures to introduce new vocabulary and ask questions.	Students actively engaged in identifying vegetables, fruits and drinks in pictures. Teacher: What is this? Students: Apple Teacher: What is this? Students: Cucumber Teacher: And this? Students: Milkshake	10
Tangible task product (posters) (1,2,3,4,5,6)	Fatima modelled making posters by developing sample posters.	Students worked together making posters of alphabet letters, types of clothes, and names of colors.	7
Songs (2,3)	Huda introduced the alphabet letters' song and invited the children to sing.	Learners sang the alphabet letters while listening to the song.	5
Pictures and songs (2,3)	Marwa held up pictures to prompt students' action to the alphabet song.	Students actively engaged with the combination of the use of these tools in some activities. For example, Students clapped their hands while looking at the pictures and listening to the song. -Students held up correct pictures to match the words in order while	-2 -7

		listening to the alphabet song.	
Drawing to guess the meaning of the words (4,5)	Ali asked the students: What does the weather look like in December? (ibid) Then, Ali drew a cloud with raindrops on the board to hint at the answer.	Students did not know the answer when Ali asked the question. But after Ali hinted the answer by drawing it on the board, students positively guessed the meaning of the words from the teacher's drawing. Students: Cloudy and rainy.	(videoed: 2 mins-30 sec)
1.2. Cooperative work			
Team competition (2,3)	Marwa organized teams and explained the competition.	Students actively joined in the team competition. Students sang louder than their competitors.	5
Interesting game (4)	Ali played Hangman game with learners and asked them to answer questions; Ali: "Something we sit on, it has four letters?"	Students answered questions when playing the teacher-led game. Students: sofa.	8
Group work (1,2,3,4,5)	Samar asked learners to work together to answer the exercise that one child was not able to answer.	Students actively worked together as a group to achieve the same goal to assist them in understanding how to answer this exercise.	3
Pair work (1,4)	Samar asked every two learners to stand before the class and describe each other's clothes.	Students actively responded by describing each other's clothes in front of the class. Majed: "Mohamed's shirt is pink, trousers are green,	3

		socks are white, and shoes are black".	
Encourage participation (1,2,3,4,5,6)	Ali encouraged learners to participate by asking them to answer questions: Teacher: My favorite color is red. Teacher: What is the colour of Ali's trousers?	Students actively took part in classroom interactions. What is your favorite color? Student: My favorite colors are green and black. Student: My favorite color is blue. Student: Ali's trousers are black.	3
Involve students in teacher-led discussion (1,4,5)	After Samar explained the lesson, she involved them in the discussion by asking them to talk about clothes.	Students actively involved in discussion with the teacher. Teacher: Who can talk about his/her own clothes? Students: Me, me me Teacher, Abd Almalek Teacher: If we want to talk about ourselves, what we need to say; I am. Abd Almalek: I am wearing a black jacket, blue trousers, white socks and black shoes.	3
1.3.Traditional spoken written activities			
Answer exercises (1,3,4,5,6)	Samar asked students to answer the exercises in the textbook.	Students positively responded answering questions; they raised their hands and wrote the answers on the board.	14
Specific individual actions (3,6)	Fatima asked learners one by one to stand in front of the class and name their parts of the body.	Students worked on the assigned activity; they stood one by one in front of the class to name the parts of the body by pointing	13

		their finger to different parts of the body.	
Repeating after teacher (1,2,3,4,5,6)	Ali said the words of the lesson (a bed, a bath, a sofa, a chair) and asked learner to repeat after him, he repeated saying those words many times.	Students actively repeated words after the teacher. Teacher: A bed, a bath, a sofa, a chair Students: A bed, a bath, a sofa, a chair.	2
Translation to Arabic (1,2,3,4,5,6)	Ahmed translated the questions from English to Arabic for learners to understand the meaning of the question and ensure learners' engagement with him. Teacher: What is light blue and navy blue? الازرق هو شن الداكن والازرق الهافت	Students were more engaged when the teacher translated some sentences from English to Arabic. Student: This book is light blue, and this speaker is navy blue.	(videoed: 6mins-50sec)
Tangible rewards (3,6)	Huda rewarded learners with stars as a sign to recognise their effort; when they actively engage with the teacher; "Today, Abdarrhman actively participates with me, he was doing a very good job. He will get a star". Therefore	Abdarrhman was engaged with the teacher for the rest of the lesson, and other learners started to participate more with Huda.	(videoed: 7min:57sec)
2. Non-verbal communication			

Maintain eye contact (1,2,3,4,5,6)	Ali maintained eye contact with learners while explaining the lesson.	Students looked at the teacher during the activity. الاستاد: توا بنشوفوا علي السبوره وين الشمال ووين الجنوب ووين الغرب ووين الشرق Teacher: "Now, we will see on the board where the north, the south, east and the west is". الاستاد: ديمه لاحظوا ان الشمال ديمه الفوق, ادا احد سالني وين الشمال, هذا الشمال ديمه الفوق, هذا شن هو؟ "Teacher: always note that north is up if anyone asks you where the north is? This is the north, always up; what is this?" Student: North	4
Facial expression (1,2,3,4,5,6)	Marwa laughed and smiled as a response of learners' answering to one of the questions.	Students smiled to show their enthusiasm. Teacher: Which word (queen, rocket, sun, tomato, umbrella, and violin) is used to play a tune? Student: it is a tomato. The teacher laughed and said: is a tomato used to play a tune! All laughed and smiled.	(videoed: 16 mins- 20sec)
Pitch of voice (1,2,3,4,5,6)	Huda raised her voice to make learners aware to keep repeating after listening to the CDs.	Students actively responded to Huda's non-verbal communication, and they kept repeating words after listening to the CDs.	
Body language (Gesture/Postures) (1,2,3,4,5,6)	Ali: "We took ten words in the geographical location's lesson. We need to memorise them"(Ali raised his hand)	Students leant forwards and nodded through moving their head up and down as a sign of agreement of what asked them to do.	(videoed: 2mins)

Body language (bend down to students) (1,2,3,4,5,6)	Fatima bent down to the student to assist him finding the exercise they were working on in the activity book.	The student was happy finding the exercise and participated with the teacher to answer the exercises.	(videoed:16mins)
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Teacher-led activities were also prominent in the interviews. The teachers discussed the types of engagement techniques they preferred to use or they thought were best to use to engage learners in the classroom. They confirmed that using engagement activities inside the classroom encourages and motivates children to learn English. Engagement techniques such as using CDs, teaching aids, pictures and songs have a positive impact on learners' participation and increase the level of engagement. For example, Samar, Marwa, Huda and Ahmed considered one of the best teaching aids to attract learners attention is technology. *“Using technology in the classroom, such as pictures and CDs, is the best strategy to motivate learners. Their advantage lies in increasing the activity of students inside the classroom”* [Interview 1:Samar, 22/11/2018]. Huda reported her selection of the activities that encourage learners as *“Depending on the lesson, and what learners prefer to do. I try to use more modern activities that are useful and assist learners to be active more than just writing or doing the homework”* [Interview 3:Huda, 05/12/2018]. Ahmed explained

“The English language is a foreign language, how do they like it? Some learners are silent and it seems they are not understanding, some other learners are sitting not absorbing, and sleepy, what things make them active? How to attract their attention? Technology, songs and colours are the solutions. Learners are like a baby who likes colours [Interview 5:Ahmed, 02/01/2019].

Ali indicated that activities such as playing games and guessing words through drawing are the best engagement activities for learners. He added, these activities assist in *“having fun in learning, assisting learners to think with me and it helped them to learn the words faster”*. Ali also expressed his interest in using "pair and group work," *"I like peer and group work, this kind of activities help me a lot especially if I find some learners do not pay attention to me, then I put them with some active learners. This technique helps me a lot”* [Interview 4:Ali, 01/01/2019].

Teachers also confirmed that using teaching aids was one of the best engagement techniques to engage learners in learning English. Samar used them to ask questions while Huda found them necessary to facilitate interaction between teacher and students for example *“giving learners letters and ask them to stick on the board to form words”* [Interview 3:Huda, 05/12/2018].

Some teachers discussed the benefits of using pictures to encourage learners' engagement. Marwa said

“If a learner is sitting and we say the word an apple, he will not interact with me, but when I encourage him with showing pictures while he is listening to the song at the same time, there will be more activity in the classroom and assist him to memorise well” [Interview 2:Marwa, 27/11/2017].

Huda expressed her preference for using pictures and songs, listening to the CD, and doing some activities to engage learners. From the observation, it is apparent that Marwa and Huda

often create competition between learners with the explicit purpose of increasing levels of engagement.

“For encouraging them, made it like a game to see which team will win and in order to assist the lazy learner who does not want to speak, and the quiet learner to raise their voice and to motivate them. I used this technique in more than one class, and I noticed that lazy learners become more active and participate more” [Interview 2:Marwa, 27/11/2017].

On occasions, teachers used non-verbal communication such as maintaining eye contact, using facial expressions and gesturing with learners. For example, in Marwa’s class and while the children were pronouncing letters and words, she was observed pointing with her finger to specific learners. In the interview, Marwa illustrated her gesturing: *“I pointed to quiet learners who paid less attention in order to motivate them to speak more and to know I am paying attention to them” [Interview 2:Marwa, 27/11/2017].* Marwa explained that she is sure they know letters, sounds, and words, but they are quiet learners. That is why she concentrated on them to participate.

Discussion

The Libyan EFL teachers implemented various activities to engage children in learning English inside the classroom, thereby facilitating their engagement and understanding. They developed activities with CDs, pictures, answering exercises, team competitions, group work, pair work, repeating after the teacher, translations, and games. The findings reinforce research by Blumenfeld et al. (1996) and Kiili (2005) that students develop more understanding when actively participating in the learning process and engaging in activities such as group work and gaming. Studies in this field acknowledge the effectiveness of using learning activities to maintain learners' interest in learning, especially in the formative years of school. For example, Skinner et al. (2008) found that children who participated and worked hard in learning activities increased their feelings of fun and enjoyment. However, children with lower participation rates in the classroom were more likely to feel bored and be less engaged in learning activities.

There is a positive correlation between the use of CLT activities and engagement. According to the types of activities used by Libyan teachers in this study, the findings demonstrate that they adopted or tried to adopt CLT practices in their teaching. For example, in the interview discussions with teachers, Samar, Huda, and Ahmed clearly showed the importance of adapting a Communicative Language approach effectively to assist children in learning English in class. Marwa and Huda used the compact disc many times in their teaching practice to facilitate learning and engage the learners in English. This finding supports what Garton et al. (2011) reported in that study of 144 countries worldwide. They found that listening to a CD was the most popular activity among English teachers in primary classrooms. Ali reported using games as a creative activity to facilitate learning, and these findings are similar to Aldabbus (2008), who found that using games in learning was a helpful and exciting activity that assists in producing long utterances in English among 11-year-old children.

There is also evidence that the Libyan teachers used pair and group work in conducting activities which in turn increased learners’ engagement and cooperation inside the classroom. Based on classroom observations, children actively held up the pictures and worked together

to answer the exercises in the activity book. This contrasts with the findings of earlier Libyan studies by Assalahi (2013), Elabbar (2011), and Orafi (2008), where there was little evidence of the use of these activities. This is strong evidence of a change in Libyan teachers' attitudes towards using CLT over the ten years since Orafi's study. The current study, ten years later, shows that Libyan teachers are now more confident in including such activities in their teaching. Even earlier, the Sakui (2004) study in Japan found that teachers' lack of confidence was considered one of the reasons for the limited implementation of CLT and of conducting activities such as pair and group work, as he found these activities played only a minor role in their teaching.

This current Libyan study in the primary classroom has teachers using pictures, drawing, songs, and team competition as practical tools in engaging learners, increasing their vocabulary, and having fun. For example, the formative learners responded positively to using these tools while learning English; they actively repeated the vocabulary shown in the pictures and paid attention to the teacher. As their participation increased, they seemed happier, more interested, and more excited to do these activities. Learners' engagement increased when teachers used pictures and songs in one activity. They became more physically engaged by clapping their hands or raising pictures while they sang with the teacher. These findings support the Joklová (2009) study, which claimed that pictures "do have an impact on students' motivation and interest" and are "excellent tools for the demonstration of the meaning, especially regarding particular things" (Joklová, 2009, p. 47). This study also echoed the research of Rohman (2016) and Sholihah (2009), who both found pictures to be a necessary and effective tool for teaching vocabulary in the seventh and fifth grades, respectively. Joklová (2009) revealed that the effect of pictures is "further amplified if they are combined with other tools such as songs or sense relations" (p. 48) including team competition and puzzles. According to the study conducted by Sevik (2011) in Turkish primary schools, 94.2% of teachers believed that songs have to be an essential part of the English language teaching curriculum, and 82.7% believed that songs give many opportunities for young learners to show their skills in many language areas. Both the findings of this study and the existing literature support the idea that "tasks that work best tend to have some fun element; they use music and rhythm, songs, and rhymes accompanied by physical activities" (Nikolov & Mihaljević Djigunović, 2019, p. 15).

A notable finding among the teachers with teaching experience of less than ten years in this study was that Marwa and Ali utilized more engagement and advanced activities than teachers with experience of more than ten years. They depended on activities incorporating CDs, digital projectors, pair work, group work, songs, games, and team competitions. They encouraged student participation to introduce and explain the lessons and to engage learners in learning. The possible explanation was that those teachers studied the communicative approach and the principles of using CLT in their university teaching. The new English curriculum based on this approach was introduced into the Libyan educational system in 2000. Hence, the younger teachers could apply what they had learned compared with teachers who had more experience but had not studied this approach in their university training. This finding supported by the study of Orafi and Borg (2009) when they indicated the gap between what English

teachers studied at Libyan universities before many years and what they required them to teach at schools.

Libyan teachers used some traditional activities such as “repeating after the teacher” and “answering exercises” in their teaching practices in ways similar to those of Garton et al. (2011) and Kim (2002), who found that "repeating after the teacher" was one of the ordinary and popular traditional activities used by teachers in primary, middle and high schools. Their study revealed that translation was one of the activities never or rarely used inside the classroom. In contrast, this Libyan study demonstrated that translation was often used to facilitate learners' understanding particularly of new vocabulary in English. It was also used as an engagement technique to ensure children's interaction during the lessons.

The positive role of teachers' non-verbal communication in attaining learners' attention and engaging them in learning was evident in this study. Nonverbal communication was frequently used by the six teachers. The findings support Galloway (1966), who argued that "pupils may learn more true meaning from nonverbal messages than they do from our verbalizations. For indeed, it is the nonverbal that we turn to for meaning when the verbal appears to be vague and confusing” (p. 61). The results also reflect the findings of Butt (2011) and Shams, Khan, Zainab, Shah, and Farid (2016), who found that teachers used non-verbal communication to obtain learners' attention and to make the learning environment active and exciting during the teaching and learning process. Nonverbal communication is, therefore, a key element in teaching English.

Conclusion

The study showed evidence that teachers utilized a wide range of engagement activities to engage learners in English. Using both verbal and non-verbal communication enhance learners’ engagement and understanding of the lessons. Although most activities were conducted with the assistance of teachers, it was clear that they tried to be a facilitator more than a controller.

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