

EXAMINING EDUCATORS' STRATEGIES IN TEACHING ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES: A CASE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

The effectiveness of English language teaching in the classroom can be influenced by a multitude of factors, and among these, the teaching style employed by the teacher is a critical determinant that can significantly impact the success of the learning activities. This study aims to investigate the types of teaching strategies employed by English teachers in vocational high schools, specifically under the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. A qualitative research approach has adopted, and data collection has done through two main techniques: classroom observation and interviews. The results showed that both teachers implemented lecturing and small group discussions as their primary teaching strategies. The study also revealed the need for English lessons to be more specific to a topic that is closely related to students' majors, as highlighted by previous research. Moreover, the study revealed that different learning topics necessitate different teaching strategies, and using multiple strategies can enhance learning outcomes. However, this study is limited to focus on teaching strategies in the context of the independent curriculum in vocational high schools, which require further exploration of students' direct responses to these strategies in the classroom.

Keywords: teaching strategies, vocational high school, English teaching.

INTRODUCTION

The success of teaching English in the classroom is influenced by various factors, with the teacher's teaching style being particularly significant (Nguyen et al., 2018). The primary objective of learning activities is to develop students' fluency in communication, comprehension of diverse messages, and effective expression of their thoughts and ideas (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Teachers must prioritize the communicative aspect of language learning when choosing activities to help students achieve their language goals. Teachers have the responsibility to employ various pedagogical techniques to meet the objectives of teaching and learning (Brown, 2007). They should develop effective strategies aligned with students' educational goals, emphasizing communication skills (Cole, 2008). Being creative and flexible, teachers must identify students' specific learning needs and design instructional plans accordingly. Creating a positive and supportive environment that fosters active engagement and risk-taking is crucial. Encouraging English speaking, interactive activities, authentic materials, and multimedia resources are effective strategies (Donald C. Orlich, 2010). Regular feedback and support should be provided to ensure students' progress in language development.

There has been a significant amount of research conducted on teaching strategies in Vocational High Schools, but limited research has focused on strategies in the context of the independent curriculum (previous studies mainly examined the 2013 Curriculum). Language teachers encounter obstacles from both intrinsic and extrinsic factors in teaching and learning practices. As has been studied in some previous studies, in Asian contexts where non-native speakers are predominant, teachers often feel underprepared in certain aspects of teaching. This highlights the need to move away from a one-size-fits-all approach

that overlooks the diverse needs of each student. Additionally, factors such as students' learning styles, interests, speed of learning, capabilities, and cultural backgrounds present further challenges for teachers in determining the appropriate teaching strategies (Bai et al., 2019; Suprayogi et al., 2017; Tomlinson, 2001; Tsunemoto et al., 2020)

Previous research on teaching strategies in vocational education settings in Indonesia found that implementing several classroom strategies positively impacted students' foreign language acquisition. However, some teachers may not apply many strategies due to lack of motivation or personality. National syllabus provisions must be followed for equity in formal classroom learning. Updating the curriculum and syllabus has also presented challenges for English teachers (Inayah, 2012; Rido et al., 2016). Efficacious teachers can address student diversity in foreign language learning by adjusting the curriculum, which can positively impact students' English development and minimize the negative relationship between Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) and academic (Botes et al., 2020; Jacoby & Lesaux, 2019; Moore, 2015; Nafissi & Shafiee, 2020).

Creating culturally sensitive learning environments that foster positive relationships among students, teachers, and parents is essential for enhancing the learning experience, according to Gu et al. (2022). Proficient English teachers should possess a diverse range of pedagogical skills and knowledge to cater to individual learning styles and design effective lessons (Freeman & Le Dréan, 2017). Another study also emphasizes the importance of teaching strategies in addressing students' unique needs, strengths, and limitations (Moore, 2015), while Thi Hong Nhung (2018) suggests that selecting appropriate teaching strategies based on shared values and diversity positively impacts foreign language learning and academic achievement. Teachers should create a supportive learning environment, ensuring the physical and mental well-being of students (Petrie & Darragh, 2018). Introducing and incorporating culture into foreign language learning, particularly in vocational high schools, is crucial for skill acquisition (Jung et al., 2019). Teachers should be sensitive to students' talents and backgrounds, designing suitable strategies that maximize their potential.

With recent changes giving teachers more autonomy, further research is needed. This study aims to investigate teaching strategies in the current curriculum and explore how students in vocational high schools respond to these strategies. Vocational high school students have distinct characteristics and a greater interest in productive subjects, which motivated the investigation of how teacher strategies enhance English proficiency in this setting, based on observations in adaptive English classes.

These teaching strategies offer various approaches to cater to different learning needs and enhance students' learning outcomes according to Wehrli, G & Nyquist (2003):

Table I. Types of Teaching Strategies

No.	Teaching Strategies	Description	Benefits	Shortcomings
1.	Lecturing	Lecturing involves the teacher presenting information or ideas in a structured	Benefits of lecturing include efficient delivery of information, conveying complex	Disadvantages include passive learning, limited interaction, potential mismatch with different learning

		manner to a large group of students.	<p>concepts, introducing new topics, and providing summaries.</p> <p>To make lecturing more effective, teachers can incorporate interactive elements, visual aids, and combine it with other teaching strategies.</p>	styles, and difficulty in retention without reinforcement.
2.	Brainstorming	Brainstorming is a group discussion activity where students generate ideas and solutions to a problem or topic.	<p>It promotes creative and critical thinking, collaboration, and communication skills. It can be used in various subjects, and its benefits include improved problem-solving, innovation, and creating a positive classroom culture.</p>	The potential for limited inclusivity and dominance of louder voices within the brainstorming process may hinder the exploration of diverse perspectives.
3.	Problem Solving Strategy	Problem solving involves presenting students with a challenging task and guiding them through finding a solution.	<p>It enhances critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making. The typical steps include defining the problem, generating solutions, evaluating them, selecting the best solution, and implementing it.</p> <p>Skills.</p> <p>Problem-solving strategies can be adapted to different subjects and learning levels.</p>	Overemphasis on finding quick solutions may overlook the importance of thorough analysis and consideration of alternative approaches.
4.	Demonstration	Demonstrating involves showing students how to do something by performing a task or activity. It provides	<p>Advantages include clear understanding, engagement, and modeling.</p> <p>Teachers can enhance demonstrations by</p>	Disadvantages include time consumption, limited visibility, retention without reinforcement, and

		visual and practical examples, models skills or behaviors, and encourages active learning.	providing clear instructions, asking questions, and providing opportunities for practice.	compatibility with learning styles.
5.	Simulation	Simulation creates a simulated or virtual environment for students to make decisions and take actions. It applies theoretical knowledge to practical situations, teaches complex scenarios, and enhances engagement and motivation.	Problem simulation as a teaching strategy offers a practical and immersive learning experience that fosters critical thinking, decision-making skills, and real-world application of knowledge.	Challenges include feasibility, preparation, realism, and guidance requirements. Effective implementation involves clear instructions, objectives, feedback, and debriefing.
6.	Small-Group Discussion	Small-group discussion involves a facilitated conversation among a small number of students.	It promotes active learning, critical thinking, collaboration, and receiving feedback. Benefits include personal and interactive engagement, communication skills practice, and peer support.	Challenges include managing group dynamics, ensuring participation, and addressing sensitive topics. Effective implementation requires planning, setting expectations, using various techniques, and staying focused.
7.	One-To-One Strategy	One-to-one teaching involves personalized instruction and support from one teacher or tutor to one student.	It allows customization, immediate feedback, and stronger teacher-student relationships.	Drawbacks include limited social interaction, exposure to diverse perspectives, independent learning opportunities, and potential for burnout. Combination with other strategies may be beneficial for a balanced approach.
8.	Games	Games can promote student engagement,	They can teach new concepts, reinforce knowledge, and	Excessive reliance on games as a teaching strategy may result in

		motivation, and learning outcomes. Examples include Jeopardy, board games, and quiz games. Designing games should consider learning objectives, clear instructions, and alignment with the curriculum.	develop critical thinking and collaboration skills.	limited transferability of knowledge and skills to real-life contexts.
9.	Roleplay	Roleplay involves students taking on specific roles in a simulated scenario to explore different perspectives and viewpoints.	It promotes engagement, communication skills, empathy, and critical thinking. Benefits include increased understanding of complex topics and adaptability to different learning styles.	Challenges include planning, management, and suitability for all topics. Roleplay can be combined with other strategies for more engaging learning experiences.

METHOD

The focus of this study is to investigate the teaching strategies used in teaching English in vocational high schools, specifically under the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum launched by the Indonesian Ministry of Education. It aims to understand the teaching strategies employed by educators in teaching English through qualitative research. Qualitative research is a scientific investigation that aims to systematically answer a question and collect evidence to produce findings that were not predetermined. The results of this study are expected to have broader implications beyond the study's scope. Qualitative research is particularly useful in gathering culturally specific information about a particular population's values, opinions, behaviours, and social contexts (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2016; Hester & Adams, 2017). The theoretical approach for conducting this research is a Case study. This method is well-suited for researchers who want to provide a detailed description of a particular social phenomenon (Yin, 2018). Since the study focuses on a specific case in a micro-environment, using case-based inquiry is an ideal fit for the research methodology. This method involves observing the phenomenon over a period of time to gain a deeper understanding (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

The research study at hand seeks to gather data and analyse it in order to answer the research questions that have been posed. In this particular study, a qualitative research approach has been adopted, and data collection is executed through two main techniques: classroom observation and interviews. Classroom observations were used as a technique to observe the teaching strategies employed by the teacher during an English lesson in the

vocational high school. This technique provided insights into how the teacher delivers the lesson and engages with the students, how students respond to the teaching, and what challenges or opportunities arise during the lesson. Interviews with the teacher were conducted to gather their perspectives on the teaching strategies employed in the classroom, their understanding of the English language, and their experiences with the new curriculum. The subjects of this investigation are English teachers who meet the researcher's criteria for research objectives and relevance: 1) Teachers who design their teaching approach based on their observations of the learners' needs and; (2) Teachers who incorporate the Ministry of Education's latest curriculum into their classes. Criteria include teachers who determine teaching strategies based on learner needs and teach the latest curriculum. The researcher sought data from a targeted school to guide teacher selection. Two teachers were identified as eligible for the study. Teacher 1 has over 20 years of experience, attends relevant seminars and workshops, and is knowledgeable about independent curriculum. Teacher 2 has over 5 years of experience, is pursuing a master's degree, has received awards and scholarships, and holds a position at the school's Special Employment Center. Both teachers are certified professionals.

Prior to presentation, the researcher undertook further analysis of the data collected from classroom observations and interviews. The analysis process was conducted using the matrix presented by Miles & Huberman (2014), which serves as a valuable tool for interpreting the collected data. To facilitate the analysis process, the data has been categorised and divided into different sections based on the following diagram:

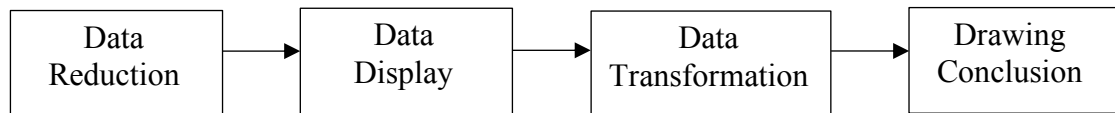


Figure 1. Data Collection Matrix

This research utilized analysis matrix by Miles et al. (2014) to process the collected data from classroom observations and interviews. The matrix comprises four key components, namely data reduction, data display, data transformation, and conclusion drawing/verification. In the data reduction stage, the data were being coded to find essential themes, categories, and concepts. The data were organized in a meaningful and manageable format in the data display stage using visual aids such as charts, graphs, and tables to reveal patterns and relationships in the data. In the data transformation stage, the relationships and connections between the data, including making comparisons and identifying causal relationships were being explored. Finally, the conclusion was drawn based on the data analysis and were being confirmed through additional data collection found from the interviews and classroom observations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the data processing from classroom observation and interviews with the research subjects, two types of findings can be found as follows.

What are the Teaching Strategies Selected by the Teachers

The present study aimed to investigate the types of teaching strategies that English teachers integrate into their classes. Drawing on Wehrli, G & Nyquist (2003) framework, the study focused on two English teachers and explored their pedagogical practices through observation and interviews. The results revealed that both teachers implemented lecturing and small group discussion as their primary teaching strategies. These findings are based on an evaluation of the implementation of learning activities from the previous semester and feedback from students.

In the initial interview question, the interviewer sought information from the teacher regarding the teaching strategies employed in her English classes, as per the teacher's own statement. Teacher I responded by explaining that she utilizes various teaching strategies depending on the language skill being taught and the nature of the material. The teacher acknowledged that a significant barrier to developing students' speaking skills is their incorrect pronunciation of words. To address this, she employs several strategies, including lecturing to review and explain the material, demonstrating proper pronunciation, and utilizing small group discussions to encourage active participation and improvement in speaking skills. The objective is to motivate students and foster a supportive learning environment where they can learn from one another.

Teacher II shared that when selecting teaching strategies for English as a summative subject, she assesses the effectiveness of the strategies used in the previous semester and academic year. This assessment helps her gauge how well the chosen strategies facilitate teaching and learning activities related to specific topics and whether they increase student motivation. Based on her assessment and review of teaching strategies used thus far, Teacher II found that simulation is most suitable for materials such as procedure texts and explanatory texts, where there are tools or steps that need to be explained by the teacher, but students struggle with comprehension and speaking English. Teacher II further explained that employing simulation as the teaching strategy, followed by lecturing, enhances students' understanding. After grasping the material's context through simulation, students can better comprehend the relevant features when the teacher explains through lecturing. The mastery of the topic's language aspects is typically emphasized through small group discussions, providing students with the freedom to explore their overall understanding of the language skills taught within the context of the related topic.

The findings of this study shed light on the importance of integrating different teaching strategies in English language teaching which has a significant correlation with the previous studies in the identical field (Asmin, 2019; Auerbach et al., 2018). The use of lecturing and small group discussion has proven to be effective in facilitating students' active and enjoyable learning experiences. This also aligns with Cooper & Brownell's (2016) research where teachers can apply this learning strategy to supply students with background information. This finding was further reinforced by Teacher I's statement who felt the impact of the post-pandemic in the field of education which caused students to experience learning loss that has the teachers need to tone down the pace of learning a little by considering that students can achieve the learning goals set by the Ministry of Education in the Merdeka Curriculum.

Moreover, the study suggests that English teachers should be encouraged to adopt a variety of teaching strategies that match their teaching goals and objectives. This could help to enhance the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process and contribute to better learning outcomes for students. Using a variety of teaching strategies provides students with a broader and more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. Each strategy brings its unique benefits and perspectives. Lecturing, for instance, may be effective for delivering fundamental knowledge, while hands-on activities and group discussions facilitate practical application and deeper comprehension. By combining these strategies, teachers can ensure that students receive a well-rounded education, exploring different facets of the subject matter and gaining a holistic understanding.

How the Selected Teaching Strategies Support Students' Learning Experience

This study aimed to explore how the implementation of various teaching strategies supports the English learning process, specifically for vocational high school students. The results showed that each teaching strategy used by the teacher has its unique contribution to supporting students' learning activities. Lecturing helps to provide essential background information at the beginning of learning activities, while simulation is particularly effective for hands-on learners. Demonstration is useful for improving pronunciation and speaking skills, and small group discussions allow students to share their thoughts and ideas with their peers.

The study also highlighted the importance of combining different teaching strategies to achieve optimal learning outcomes. The results suggested that combining lecturing with other student-centered teaching strategies could promote a more creative and active learning environment while still enabling teachers to guide and transfer knowledge to students. As also stated from the previous studies that students who have been exposed with teaching strategies that are adaptable to the material and the needs of students, particularly vocational school students who need a lot of hands-on experience, have shown an upsurge in learning outcomes even in normative subjects (Basheer et al., 2017; Reynolds et al., 2021). The study findings indicated that English lessons should focus on topics directly relevant to students' majors, which also aligning with previous research. This highlights the importance of tailoring language instruction to specific subject areas to enhance students' learning outcomes. Teachers can design lessons that incorporate relevant vocabulary, concepts, and communication skills that directly relate to the students' academic disciplines. This tailored approach to language instruction helps students see the practical applications of language learning in their chosen fields, making the learning experience more engaging and meaningful for them. When language instruction is tailored to specific subject areas, students can better understand and apply language skills within the context of their majors. This targeted instruction allows students to develop a deeper understanding of subject-specific terminology, concepts, and academic discourse, which ultimately enhances their overall learning outcomes. By connecting language learning to their chosen fields, students can see the immediate relevance and value of language skills in their academic and professional pursuits. It helps them bridge the gap between language acquisition and real-world application, making their language learning journey more purposeful and effective.

It reinforced the idea that the selection of an appropriate teaching strategy can heavily impact the effectiveness of the learning process. However, the type of learning topic

being studied also plays a critical role in determining the most effective learning strategy. Therefore, it is important for teachers to carefully consider the learning objectives and choose the most suitable strategy accordingly. The value of combining different teaching strategies to provide a more comprehensive learning experience is getting clearer when carefully implemented within the needs of the students. The use of visual aids, group discussions, and problem-based learning approaches can be particularly effective for teaching complex topics and practical skills (Asmin, 2019; Wehrli, G & Nyquist, 2003). By carefully selecting and combining various teaching strategies, teachers can create a student-centered learning environment that promotes active and enjoyable learning experiences.

CONCLUSION

The study findings suggest that uncomplicated teaching techniques such as lecturing and small group discussions can still effectively facilitate student learning, even when the curriculum promotes a more student-centric approach. However, it is important to strike a balance by incorporating other teaching methods to ensure sustained engagement and active participation. Employing various strategies brings distinct advantages, with lecturing conveying fundamental knowledge, simulations and demonstrations engaging students in practical activities and refining their speaking skills, and small group discussions fostering creativity and interactive communication. The study underscores the importance of selecting teaching strategies based on the specific learning topic, aligning them with the learning objectives to achieve desired outcomes. Different subjects may require different approaches, and employing a combination of strategies promotes comprehensive understanding and maximizes learning outcomes. By selecting suitable strategies and combining them, teachers can enhance students' understanding, complement each attribute, and achieve optimal learning outcomes aligned with the objectives. Therefore, choosing the most effective strategy that matches the learning objectives and topic is crucial. Based on the research results, several recommendations are beneficial for both English teachers and future researchers. Educators, particularly those at the vocational high school level, are encouraged to choose teaching strategies that suit students' needs, with this study serving as a valuable reference for strategies suitable for engineering major students. Further research exploration is suggested for direct responses from students regarding the application of teaching strategies in the classroom. Additionally, there is a need for further research on innovative and student-centered teaching strategies that align with the new curriculum, aiming to enhance students' learning experiences in more meaningful ways.

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