

# **EFL TEACHERS' TEACHING STRATEGIES IN PUBLIC VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOLS IN SINGARAJA**

by  
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This research was conducted in an attempt to investigate the EFL teachers' teaching strategies in Public Vocational High Schools in Singaraja. It is concerned with what teaching strategies implemented by the EFL teachers, similarities and differences of teaching strategies applied, and problems encountered by the teachers in implementing the strategies.

The settings of this research were three Public Vocational High Schools in Singaraja, namely: SMKN 1 Singaraja, SMKN 2 Singaraja, and SMKN 3 Singaraja. The subjects of this research were six EFL teachers who taught Tenth Grade students. This research was designed as a qualitative research. The data were collected through questionnaire, interview, observation, and document study. Data were analyzed by using Celce-Murcia (2001) and Herrel and Jordan (2004) EFL teaching strategies.

Based on the data analysis, the study identified some findings. First, the EFL teachers in Public Vocational High Schools in Singaraja implemented various teaching strategies. There were approximately thirty four strategies were implemented, namely: Academic language Scaffolding, Advance organizers, Language focus lessons, Cloze, Collaborative reading, Communication games, Cooperative learning, Emotive writing tasks, Guided writing, Imaging, Interactive listening, Attribute charting, Language framework planning, Learning centers, Leveled questions, Listening and answering, Listening and repeating, Modeled talk, Multimedia presentations, Part-centered, Partner work, Peer Tutoring, Practical writing tasks, Predictable routines and signals, Realia strategies, Scripting, Socio-psycholinguistic, Sorting activities, Task listening, Visual scaffolding, Vocabulary processing, Vocabulary role play, Talk show, and Syntax surgery. Second, there were strategies which were similar from one school to the others with similarities or differences in the focused of the skills and also the procedures in applying the strategies. It was also found that the number of strategies implemented in the three schools was different. Third, there were some problems that the EFL teachers dealt with in implementing the strategies. They were the students, in terms of their level, motivation and heterogeneity, the teachers, in terms of their lack of motivation to teach and their personality, and the facility.

**Key words:** teaching strategy, Public Vocational High School

## **STRATEGI PEMBELAJARAN GURU BAHASA INGGRIS DI SEKOLAH MENENGAH KEJURUAN NEGERI DI SINGARAJA**

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Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meneliti strategi pembelajaran guru Bahasa Inggris di SMK Negeri di Singaraja, khususnya jenis-jenis strategi pembelajaran yang digunakan, persamaan dan perbedaan strategi yang digunakan di SMK Negeri di Singaraja, dan masalah yang dihadapi dalam pelaksanaan strategi.

Penelitian dilakukan di tiga SMK di Singaraja, SMKN 1 Singaraja, SMKN 2 Singaraja, and SMKN 3 Singaraja. Subjek penelitian ini adalah guru Bahasa Inggris yang mengajar di kelas X. Penelitian ini menggunakan rancangan penelitian kualitatif. Data diperoleh melalui kuesioner, wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Data dianalisis berdasarkan strategi pembelajaran Celce-Murcia (2001) dan Herrel dan Jordan (2004).

Berdasarkan data analisis, penelitian ini menghasilkan beberapa temuan. Pertama, terdapat tiga puluh empat strategi pembelajaran yang telah digunakan oleh guru Bahasa Inggris di SMK Negeri di Singaraja, yaitu: *Academic language Scaffolding, Advance organizers, Language focus lessons, Cloze, Collaborative reading, Communication games, Cooperative learning, Emotive writing tasks, Guided writing, Imaging, Interactive listening, Attribute charting, Language framework planning, Learning centers, Leveled questions, Listening and answering, Listening and repeating, Modeled talk, Multimedia presentations, Part-centered, Partner work, Peer Tutoring, Practical writing tasks, Predictable routines and signals, Realia strategies, Scripting, Socio-psycholinguistic, Sorting activities, Task listening, Visual scaffolding, Vocabulary processing, Vocabulary role play, Talk show, and Syntax surgery*. Kedua, terdapat strategi yang sama yang digunakan di ketiga sekolah tersebut dengan perbedaan pada skill yang difokuskan and prosedurnya. Terdapat juga perbedaan jumlah strategi yang digunakan yang disebabkan oleh factor siswa dan pengalaman guru. Ketiga, terdapat beberapa masalah yang dihadapi guru terkait dengan pelaksanaan strategi pembelajaran. Masalah-masalah tersebut berkaitan dengan siswa, khususnya level siswa, motivasi siswa, dan keberagaman siswa, guru, dalam hal kurangnya motivasi mengajar and kepribadian guru, dan fasilitas.

**Kata kunci:** strategi pembelajaran, SMK Negeri

## 1. INTRODUCTION

One of the functions of national education system is to develop students' potential skill to be faithful to God, knowledgeable, creative, skillful, independent, respectful, and democratic citizen (*Depdiknas, 2003*). Teaching and learning at school is the core to reach that goal. Teaching and learning as an activity to reach instructional objectives needs a thoughtful planning. It is needed in order to make kinds and procedures in teaching and learning activity have a functional value to reach the objectives.

The basic element in teaching and learning is the teacher (*Kunandar, 2007*). Teacher is a professional educator who has responsibility in educating, teaching, supervising, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating learners (*Depdiknas, 2005*). Therefore, teacher has to be able to create a comfortable and conducive class environment to make the students enjoy the class and learn the material at the same time. As a result, the goal of the learning can be achieved. Since students are various in characteristics and background, teacher needs to be careful in choosing the right way to be implemented in order to help the students achieve the learning goal. Therefore, a carefully designed procedure is primary in teaching and learning activities. In other words, teacher needs a certain strategy to reach a certain goal in teaching and learning.

A strategy is defined as a set of procedures in learning, thinking, teaching, etc. that is used as a way to achieve a certain goal (Richards, et al, 1992). Every individual has his or her own way to reach the goal/s that she or he set. That also happens to teacher. A strategy used by one teacher might be different with another teacher. It depends on the needs of their students or the learning objectives that they want to achieve.

Deciding which teaching strategy that should be applied in the class involves a thoughtful design and planning (Orlich, et al., 2010). In teaching, teacher is faced with a group of different individuals that come from different backgrounds and the goal of teaching itself is to bring those differences together into the learning (Silver, Harvey F., Richard W. Strong, and Mathew J. Perini, 2007). Therefore, teacher should consider the goal/s that she wants the students to reach. Decision of which approach and method that will be used as the basis for using a certain strategy is also important.

In second or foreign language teaching, there have been development and changes of approaches and methods over the years (Celce-Murcia, 2001). Many approaches and methods are available to be suited and used as the basic for teaching and learning in language class. The strategies rooted from those approaches and methods are abundantly varied. Lots of variations and techniques can be applied to reach the learning objectives. The learning objectives are the basic for the decision of what approach, method, and strategy that is going to be used in the process of teaching and learning.

Nowadays, EFL teachers are required to have the knowledge and skills of various teaching strategies. There have been long lists of strategies in EFL pedagogy that are developed to facilitate English language learners. Those strategies sometimes are modified from the classical ones or breakthrough. Celce-Murcia (2004) explains types of strategies that are commonly used in the four language skills. Furthermore, Herrel and Jordan (2004) have listed fifty strategies that can be used for teaching English as a foreign language.

English has been considered as the first foreign language in Indonesia. The teaching of English as foreign language is expected to meet the demand to master all the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Cahyono and Widiati, 2011:15). In relation to that, the teaching of English has been being carried out in almost level of schools, starting in basic primary school until secondary school. It is an elective subject in Elementary school and a compulsory subject to be taught in Junior High School and Senior High School (Hamdan and Mattarima, 2011) and also in Vocational High School.

Vocational school as a special school that teaches the students the skills needed to perform a particular job has long been the attention of the government. In Indonesia,

vocational education is recognized in secondary program of education that is SMK (Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan). A demand on more specialized labors that have higher level of skills triggers government of Indonesia to increasingly encourage and invest in the future of vocational education through public vocational schools that perform international standard. Therefore, English which has been the first requirement to join the work field has to be mastered by the students.

There had been no research served information of how the teaching of English is done in vocational school. Thus, this research would be the first research about teaching strategies in vocational schools that was done qualitatively and would give information related to the teaching of English in vocational school in Indonesia, especially in Singaraja.

Related to that issue, researcher investigated the teaching strategies used by EFL teachers in Public Vocational High Schools. To realize that idea, three Public Vocational High Schools in Singaraja were chosen, namely: SMKN 1 Singaraja, SMKN 2 Singaraja, and SMKN 3 Singaraja. The study focused on teachers who teach in Grade X. Grade X is the year in which the students have to adapt themselves with the new situation of Senior High School atmosphere. Furthermore, for those students who choose to be in Vocational School will face different need of learning language. Therefore, teachers teaching in Grade X have to think carefully the teaching strategies they will apply in the class so that the students can adapt themselves easily with the situation in Vocational School, especially in language class.

Considering the difference of specification that the public vocational high schools have, teachers may adopt distinctive strategies to meet their specific goals. They are required to be innovative and creative in strategy use because this very much affects the quality of the output. The graduates are prepared to be ready to compete in the work force and to win this competition is depended on teacher's teaching quality.

Regarding to this matter, the researcher attempted to investigate the teaching strategies used by EFL teachers in public vocational high schools in Singaraja, whether the language teaching strategies implemented similar or different. Moreover, the researcher also wanted to investigate the problems encountered by the teachers in implementing the language teaching strategies.

## **2. RESEARCH METHOD**

The design of this research is phenomenological research. The purpose of this study was to describe and interpret the experiences of participants considering a particular event or phenomena in order to understand the participants' meanings that they construct from those

experiences (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:346). This kind of research looks closely at an individual's interpretation of his or her experiences. It will give a thorough description of the participant's experiences on a certain phenomenon. This study also seeks out individual aspects and shared commonalities that several groups of individuals have had (Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle, 2010: 148). Here the researcher observed and systematically recorded the behavior of individuals, in order to describe the behavior (Gravetter and Forzano, 2008). In this study, the researcher observed the teaching strategies implemented by the EFL teachers of Public Vocational High Schools. The detail description of the EFL teachers' teaching strategies is given as the report of the study. The researcher also identified the similarities and differences of the strategies used by 10<sup>th</sup> Grade EFL teachers in the three Public Vocational High Schools.

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The data in this research collected through three ways, observation, interview, and document study. Reed and Bergemann (1992) states that an observation becomes an effective means of learning to observe how certain teaching methods are employed in the schools, how classrooms are organized, and how students respond to the classroom environment. The researcher was a complete observer in this study. In this research, semi structured interview was used. It was done to get deep information about the implementation of teaching strategies applied by EFL teachers in Public Vocational High School. The documents used in this research were the lesson plans prepared by the EFL teachers in three Public Vocational High Schools in Singaraja. The lesson plans were used to get information about how the teachers implemented the teaching strategies in their classes.

Data analysis is done when the data has been collected. Miles and Huberman (as cited in Sugiyono, 2010) stated that there are three steps in data analysis; namely: data reduction, data display, and verification. Data reduction means summarizing, choosing the subject matters, focusing on things that are important, looking for themes and patterns (Sugiyono, 2010). From the observation sheet and the anecdotal records, the researcher listed all the strategies found during the observation and the activities in which the strategies applied. The result of the interviews was also transcribed to support the findings. In this research, the data

were presented in the form of narrative text. The researcher explained the strategies used by the EFL teachers in public vocational high schools in Singaraja, the problems encountered by the teachers in implementing the strategies, and also the similarities and differences of the strategies used by the teachers from the three different schools. In conclusion, the researcher answered the research problems posted.

### **3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The findings showed the total number of strategies implemented by EFL teachers in Public Vocational High Schools in Singaraja was thirty four strategies. Those strategies were Academic language Scaffolding, Advance organizers, Language focus lessons, Cloze, Collaborative reading, Communication games, Cooperative learning, Emotive writing tasks, Guided writing, Imaging, Interactive listening, Attribute charting, Language framework planning, Learning centers, Leveled questions, Listening and answering, Listening and repeating, Modeled talk, Multimedia presentations, Part-centered, Partner work, Peer Tutoring, Practical writing tasks, Predictable routines and signals, Realia strategies, Scripting, Socio-psycholinguistic, Sorting activities, Task listening, Visual scaffolding, Vocabulary processing, Vocabulary role play, Talk show, and Syntax surgery.

There were strategies implemented for only one indicator, or more than one indicator. There were also cases in which the strategies applied were not based on certain indicator, such as Predictable routines and signals and Emotive writing. Moreover, the strategies were applied in various lesson sections.

From the questionnaire given to the teachers, it was seen that the teachers affirmed that they implemented almost all strategies. However, from the observation sessions, it was found that the teachers did not implement all strategies that they had affirmed in the questionnaire. This matter was then confirmed to the teachers. They said that they had implemented it in other materials or in other class. They further explained how they decided which strategy to be used.

Looking back all strategies implemented by the teachers in the three public vocational high schools and the specifications that the schools have, it is concluded that there was no specific strategy used for certain school specialization. All strategies were applicable to all school specializations. It was then the duty of the teachers to connect and facilitate students to experience things that would make them ready to be in the work field.

In relation to the approaches and methods that become the basic of strategies implemented by the teachers, it is proved that the teachers had tried various ways to reach the ability that had to be achieved by 10<sup>th</sup> grade students as it is stated in the standard competence in which students have to be able to communicate at the novice level of English. To reach that final learning objective, teachers concerned on the grammatical rules, the four language skills, students' cognitive, affective, and communicative skills.

Through Grammar Translation approach, teachers tried to make the students aware of the grammar rules that English has so that later on they had good basic of in the rules of English. By implementing principles that based on Direct Approach, teachers prepared the students to use the target language effectively. Furthermore, teachers tried to make the students get used to the pattern of the target language by focusing the lesson and repeating what they listened through the principles that based on Audiolingualism. Through The Silent Way method, teachers trained students to activate their cognitive skills in accomplishing tasks given. Besides concerning on students' cognitive skill, teachers also considered their affective skill to work and share with others. Affective Humanistic approach which is the underlying theory of Community Language Learning serves as the basic of that idea. Moreover, Communicative approach served the most frequent theory concerned by the teachers to enhance students' communicative ability.

In conclusion, to reach the standard competence "communicate in novice level" which became the learning objective of vocational school that had to be achieved in the first high school year, teachers went through different approaches. Through these differences, students would be able to experience many things along the process of reaching the final end of their first year in vocational high school.

Moreover, there are eight similar strategies implemented in three public vocational high schools. Those strategies are: advance organizers, collaborative reading, cooperative learning, guided writing, language focus lessons, leveled questions, realia strategies, and vocabulary processing.

There are fourteen strategies that implemented in two schools, SMKN 1 Singaraja and SMKN 3 Singaraja. Those strategies are imaging, language framework planning, modeled talk, multimedia presentations, part-centered, partner work, peer tutoring, predictable routine and signals, scripting, visual scaffolding, and vocabulary role play.

The similarities are regarding to the kinds of strategies used that were found in the three schools or two schools. Teachers applied similar strategies for the same focused skills and

procedures, or they could use it in a different way. The similarity could happen because of the same material and same learning goals.

From the result of the observation, it was found that speaking skill has the most varied strategies implemented by the EFL teachers in three Public Vocational High Schools in Singaraja. It indicates that the teachers put more emphasis on students' speaking skill. This is in line with the standard competence that should be achieved by the students that is communicating using English in novice, elementary and intermediate level in which in the practice students have to be provided with more opportunities to use the language.

There is difference related to the number of strategies implemented by the EFL teachers in Public Vocational High Schools. There were 21 strategies found in SMKN 1 Singaraja, 9 strategies found in SMKN 2 Singaraja, and 32 strategies found in SMKN 3 Singaraja.

The first thing that might cause the difference variation is the students. Students in each school have different ability in learning English. This different ability led to different kind of strategies that best facilitate the students to reach the goal.

The second is the teacher. The teachers' length of experience in teaching seemed to be the main reason of the biggest number of variation of strategies found in SMKN 3 Singaraja. The teachers in SMKN 1 Singaraja and SMKN 2 Singaraja have the average of two years experience in teaching and had never attended any seminar related to teaching strategies during the year of teaching. Meanwhile teachers in SMKN 3 Singaraja have more than five years experience in teaching. One of the teachers in SMKN 3 Singaraja, teacher F, had been teaching in that school since around twenty two years ago. He had been very familiar with the characteristics of the materials and the students in vocational school that made the teacher easy to decide which strategy that was suitable to be implemented. The other teacher of SMKN 3 Singaraja, teacher E, had been in some seminars about teaching strategies and joined competition about teaching strategies. So the teacher was quite familiar with effective and innovative teaching strategies.

There were three problems encountered by the teachers in implementing the teaching strategies. The first is the students that include students' level, motivation, and heterogeneity. The second is the facility that the school had. The last is, the teachers themselves that include their lack motivation in teaching, and their personality.

Teachers found it difficult to decide the appropriate strategies to make all of students engage on the same teaching and learning activities since they are heterogeneous and different in level of understanding certain instructions. Teachers often had to do an extra encouragement to make the students join the classroom activities from beginning to end



because of their low motivation in learning. The same problems also found by Panji (2012). In his research, students' negative language attitude and also heterogeneity in language ability owned by the students resulted on various responses from the students towards the strategies being implemented by the teachers. As a result, sometimes the teacher needed to spend more time and effort with the low achiever students, even sometimes in explaining simple thing as explaining an activity.

Unfortunately, problems also came from the teachers' side. Lack of motivation to teach and teacher's personality seemed to affect the success of strategies implemented.

Teacher's lack of motivation had made the teacher unwilling to apply various strategies. Panji (2012) also found that this matter made the teachers asked students to do exercises on the book for full two hours. This lack of motivation, according to Husin et al (as cited in Panji, 2012) sometimes happens due to teachers' personal problems they face outside the class.

Teacher's personality was found to be one of the obstacles in implementing the strategies. When the teacher is faced with students that need more explanation in all the things learned, she needs to have more patience in dealing with them. When the teacher is easy to get angry, it will affect the whole class mood. If that's the case, students would feel uncomfortable and be afraid being in the class. At this time, there is possibility they get nothing from the activities that have been prepared by the teacher. Students would learn better in a more convenient atmosphere created from the cooperation between teacher and students.

In conclusion, teachers faced some problems in implementing the teaching strategies. The problems could come from the students, regarding their level, motivation and heterogeneous ability. Moreover, teachers could also be obstacle in implementing the teaching strategies in the class, in terms of their personality and their lack of motivation to teach.

#### **4. CLOSING**

Based on the findings and the discussion on the previous section it can be concluded that:

1. EFL teachers in three Public Vocational High Schools in Singaraja had implemented various strategies to facilitate the students in achieving the learning objectives. The implementation of the strategies was varied based on the indicators and in which part of

the lesson sections they were implemented. There was no specific strategy used for certain school specialization. The strategies were applicable in all specializations. It is then the job of the teachers to connect and facilitate it so that students would experience. Various strategies applied to reach one big learning objective “communicate in novice level” (as it is stated in standard competence) gave opportunity for students to experience many different things along the process of reaching that final goal.

2. There were strategies which were similar from one school to the others. However, there were differences found in the focused of the skills and also the procedures in applying the strategies. The difference of the number of strategies implemented was due to the students’ level and teachers’ experiences.
3. There were three factors faced in implementing strategies. The first was the students, in terms of their level, lack of motivation, and heterogeneity. The second is the teacher that includes teacher’s lack of motivation to teach and teacher’s personality. The last is the limitation of the facility.

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