

TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES PRACTICED BY LANGUAGE TEACHERS TO ACTIVELY ENGAGE THEIR STUDENTS IN LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

Teaching strategies are techniques used by teachers to help students become independent in learning and active strategic learners. Teaching strategies become learning strategies when students independently choose suitable ones and practice them effectively to achieve tasks or meet their learning goals. This study aims to examine the learning strategies applied by language teachers in language learning practices in the classroom to optimize students' language skill acquisition. Data collection methods used are observation, interview, and documentation. The data analysis technique is descriptive qualitative analysis, namely data reduction, presentation, and concluding. The results showed that there are several favorable teaching strategies employed by language teachers to improve students' language skills. This research has implications for educational institutions to continually improve teachers' skills to implement effective and innovative learning strategies.

Keywords: strategy, learning, language, ability, students.

Introduction

Learning is essentially a process of interaction between students and their surrounding environment to develop their better behavior towards their life. To develop students' knowledge, teachers have a central role in keeping their students' engagement in learning (Garrett, 2013). Teachers' main duty is to coordinate students' learning conditions to support students' behavior changes in learning to enhance their life. This is due to the fact that learning is a conscious effort done by teachers to help students so that they can learn according to their interests and needs. Therefore, teachers should always act as facilitators to provide and create situations that support the improvement of students' learning abilities (Mantra, Astawa, & Handayani, 2019). Moreover, it can be said that learning is one of the factors that influence and play an important role in shaping individual behavior for the better living condition.

In broader sense, although practically, students' behavior changes can clearly be seen through affective

observation, the learning process is also an invisible mental activity, meaning that the process of changes that occur in a person's mind cannot be witnessed clearly. It is only the symptoms of a visible change in behavior that can be seen. Therefore, in general, the term learning is interpreted as an activity that results in a change in behavior. With this understanding, learning can be interpreted as an activity carried out by the teacher in such a way that the student's behavior changes for the better condition of life. (Mantra, Suparsa, & Widnyana, 2019). To be professional in teaching, all teachers are obliged to conduct appropriate teaching strategies (Orlich, Harder, Callahan, Trevisan, & Brown, 2010). Nowadays, the development of learning and learning today is increasing rapidly, along with the increasing number of new sources of knowledge. Specifically, for language learning, it has its own peculiarities because it involves the essence of learning in various knowledge through the process of communication in which makes language learning becomes very broad and complex.

Though the development of life toward sophisticated living conditions, language learning in this century was developed by referring to general principles and theories related to how language is learned both in a classroom setting and in a natural situation (Suparsa, & Mantra, 2020). Therefore, the importance of investigating teaching methodologies is an urgent matter to be carried out by academic researchers and educators. This concerns the ultimate goal that the success or failure of applied language learning will have an impact on the overall learning of other sciences. Consequently, the results of this study may affect the continuation of the development of language learning, both in terms of theory, approaches, methods, strategies, and other matters related to language learning. Moreover, how language teachers should be trained to be able to teach professionally. Nowadays, for example, the trends in applying cooperative learning in the class are increasing. This is since cooperative learning develops students' social competence (Hanze, & Berger, 2007). Consequently, teachers' development programs should also include the teachers' enhancement of cooperative learning. Additionally, other learning strategies should be also be completely comprehended and holistically practiced in the classroom (Juste, López, 2010; Wegner, Minnaert, Strehlke, 2013).

Through careful studies on teaching and learning strategies, it enables educators can see that the demands for changes in the language learning process that require a self-learning process and the development of the potential of students holistically through the learning process carried out by each teacher in the classroom. Knowing the demand for the phenomenon of changes in the educational paradigm that places humans as a complete resource provides fundamental policy directions in laying the framework for future educational development. Consequently, these changes in perspective have implications for changing perspectives and even changing concepts of language learning (Suparsa, & Mantra, 2020).

In practical terms, the expected learning language process in this new paradigm shift is a process that can develop students' potentials in a comprehensive and integrated manner holistically. However, the development process of individual dimensions can be done variously due to many factors that may influence the learning process both internally and externally. Therefore, in the learning process, teachers are not only required to deliver subject matter but they must be able to actualize their strategic role in an effort to shape student character through developing personality and prevailing meaningful values. Consequently, teachers are urged to implement innovative learning strategies to develop their students (Kalyani, Rajasekaran, 2018; Pradono, Astriani, Moniaga, 2013).

Furthermore, in relation to language teaching, teachers should intensify their learning activities to teach the four language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The four skills are interrelated and integrated. Therefore, those skills should be taught in an integrative manner. In addition, all the learning processes should appropriately be assessed to attain students' improvement (Widiastuti, Pramerta, Suparsa, Sukanadi, 2020). Moreover, teachers should continually provide feedback for the students to ensure that students improve their competencies continuously (Widiastuti, Mukminatien, Prayogo, & Irawati, 2020).

Understanding the phenomenon as described above and by acknowledging the importance of appropriate teaching and learning strategies to create a better learning condition, therefore, this study aims to further uncover the hidden shields of teaching and learning strategies employed by language teachers in a real classroom learning environment

Research Method

The research method used in this study was a qualitative research design. The research subjects were language teachers who are currently active in teaching and have a minimum of 10 years of teaching

experience. The research object in this research was the teachers' teaching strategies employed in language teaching in real classroom settings which were analyzed in terms of their intensive implementation in the classroom. The data were collected by conducting semi-structured interviews with selected teachers. All the interviews were recorded and then transcribed carefully and put into the right categories. The content and the construct validity were judged by two experts and their results were both relevantly high. To triangulate the findings, the data were also supported with direct classroom observations, and document analysis to clarify any confusion or irrelevance. The data were analyzed by comparing and carefully studying teachers' responses during the interviews using descriptive quantitative.

Results And Discussion

Teaching and learning activities carried out by the teachers to mainly to achieve certain goals that have been formulated before teaching is carried out. Teachers consciously plan to teach activities systematically by utilizing everything for the benefit of teaching. Teaching is not an easy task for teachers. In teaching teachers have to deal with a group of students, they are not only as individuals with all their uniqueness, but they are also social creatures with different backgrounds. Therefore, teachers are required to be equipped with various knowledge to comprehend their students' personalities to be able to conduct the teaching-learning process professionally.

The closed relationship between teachers and students indicates the closeness between teachers and students during the learning processes. This close relationship shows close coordination of movements between the teacher and students which means a greater feeling of friendship, happiness, enthusiasm, interest, and openness when interacting in the classroom. Concerning language teaching,

language teachers are responsible for the quality of students' language competence attainment. Language teachers generally seem to have a various understanding of language learning strategies. At this time there is still a lack of language teachers who have good skills in teaching due to various contributing factors. These factors may include teachers' understanding of the learning objectives stated in the curriculum, the ability to develop teaching programs, and the ability to prepare and implement the lesson plan to achieve the appropriate learning outcomes and ability to carry out the language assessment.

In addition, several internal inhibiting factors greatly affect the quality of language learning such as the low ability of innovative teaching strategies, low interest in reading and writing, unavailability of appropriate authentic sources, low ability in using teaching technologies, and limited language exposures. Therefore, to improve the quality of language use, both at school and in other formal settings, special attention is needed in terms of learning at school. These efforts must be carried out from an early age, namely starting from elementary school which is the basis for the formation of language skills competencies for higher levels. Language learning needs to be revitalized so that language learning is truly correlated with the improvement of students' language skills without burdening students with a variety of tedious linguistic and literary theories. Consequently, language learning must be returned to its real goal of improving students' ability to communicate effectively.

Emphasis on language learning should refer to the initial concept of learning in the lower grades, namely strengthening students' ability in language skills. This emphasis means that language teaching should completely be conducted in integrative teaching by giving a similar portion to all language skills. Moreover, the teaching should also be done authentically which can be applied at this level include: reading without spelling, reading fairy tales, arranging letters into words, composing simple sentences, rewriting the teacher's

writing, completing a short story, making free essays, and making essays about the most memorable experiences in students' daily life.

Although teachers have been well-trained to teach effectively and efficiently, there are always teaching problems to deal with in teaching. The problems are mainly related to managing the class. Because of the failure of teachers to manage the classroom, teaching goals are difficult to achieve. Good classroom management may produce good teaching and learning interactions which lead to the accomplishment of learning objectives without encountering heavy obstacles. Moreover, another problem that teachers also have is the problem of teaching approach. The teaching approach is a concept or procedure used in delivering a lesson material to achieve learning objectives easily. In this regard, a good teaching and learning strategy is needed and a variety of teaching strategies are needed. By using various teaching strategies, students feel more comfortable in engaging themselves in the learning process. In addition, integrating various teaching strategies may motivate students to be active in learning.

The teaching strategy is a way or path that must be gone through in the teaching process. Teaching strategies affect the achievement of learning objectives. Teachers whose poor in teaching strategies may cause students uneasy to attain their objectives in learning. Consequently, in teaching, teachers use more than one strategy, using combined strategies to become the learning activities much better because the strategy excites students in learning. With an enthusiasm for learning, students find it easy to achieve learning objectives. By achieving the learning objectives, it can be said that the teachers have been succeeded in teaching. This success can be seen after the language assessment is held with several learning objectives. In the learning process, various strategies must be implemented. Some of the Language Learning strategies that are often carried out by teachers include: 1) Direct Learning Strategy (Direct

Instruction), 2) Cooperative Learning Strategy, 3) Problem Solving Learning Strategy, 4) Repetition Strategy, 5) Elaboration Strategy, 6) Organizational Strategy,

One that is mostly used by the teachers is a direct learning strategy. Direct learning is a term often used for expository learning techniques, or lecture-like delivery techniques. A direct learning strategy is a form and approach to teacher-oriented learning. It is considered to be direct learning because teachers play a very dominant role in classroom interaction. Teachers deliver the learning material mainly orally and the process of learning activities are well-structured which enables teachers to control all learning activities. The main focus of this strategy is students' academic abilities. This strategy is mainly in the form of lectures and teachers' demonstrations. Besides, the strategy may include other forms of teaching which have direct control from the teachers.

Another popular strategy implemented by language teachers is cooperative Learning. Cooperative learning is a learning strategy that emphasizes the process of working together to enhance students' social skills. The group usually consists of 3 to 5 students to study a certain learning material to achieve specific learning competence. Through cooperative learning, students are encouraged to work together optimally under the circumstances of their group. Students' cooperation means that each group member must help and support each other in studying the learning material. Higher achiever students must help the lower achiever students because the final assessment is determined by the success of the group. Individual failure is the failure of the group, and vice versa. Therefore, each member must have full responsibility for the group. Learning through cooperative learning can be explained from several perspectives, namely social perspective, cognitive development perspective, and cognitive elaboration perspective.

Cooperative learning improves students' learning motivation because in cooperative learning rewards are given to

the group which means that each member of the group is equally rewarded by the teachers. Thus, the success of each individual is basically the success of the group. This sort of thing encourages each group member to work hard for success. In addition, the social perspective means that through cooperation each student helps each other in learning because they want all group members to gain success. Through intensive group work, students build up their social skills which may lead their tolerance to other members of the group and this still may go long way to their life.

Problem-solving is another teaching strategy that is commonly implemented in language teaching. Problem-solving is teaching students how to solve a problem. Students are trained to understand the problems and how to solve them appropriately to get the right solution. Meanwhile, problem-solving learning strategies are techniques to help students understand and master the learning material using problem-solving strategies. Therefore, teachers are required to design the learning materials in the forms of problems to be solved by the students. Problem-solving in learning means problem solving as the content of the lesson through a series of learning activities to obtain a proper solution to the problems. The problems are often discussed in small groups of students.

Another strategy used by language teachers in teaching is the repetition strategy. This strategy is used to simply practice students 'memorization for certain learning material. There are several learning activities to improve students' memorization. Those are, for example, memorizing words, language structures, sentence construction, paragraph characteristics, language use, etc. all things that were already in the mind were recalled for short-term, immediate, and simple purposes. The understanding of more complex learning materials requires complex repeating strategies. Underlining the important points, taking notes, summarizing, and paraphrasing and rewriting the important information is all part of the complex learning materials.

Therefore, this strategy needs to be used accordingly to achieve the required learning goals.

Another strategy used by the teachers is the elaboration strategy. This strategy is the process of adding details so that new information becomes more meaningful. With an elaboration strategy, coding is easier to do and provides more certainty. The elaboration strategy helps transfer new information from short-term to long-term memory in the brain by creating links and combinations of new and existing information. This strategy enables teachers to provide more additional information in order for their students to have a higher understanding of the learning materials. This strategy has been used a lot in the introduction of a school-based curriculum in Indonesia. Therefore, teachers are familiar with the strategy.

Another commonly used strategy is an organizational strategy. This strategy helps students learn the content of the learning material by organizing all their ideas accordingly. The organizational strategy consists of regrouping ideas or terms into smaller subsets. The strategy also serves as the identification of key ideas or facts from a larger set of information. Several organizational strategies are familiar with the teachers, for example, note-taking, mind mapping, and concept mapping. Through applying in teaching-learning processes, students can put their ideas in chronological order and they can understand them easily.

This study found that teachers practice several strategies in their teaching-learning processes. The strategies are perceived to be effective to improve their students' learning competencies. In learning, teachers are expected to be able to choose a learning strategy that is in accordance with the material being taught. Teachers should create a classroom atmosphere that is flexible and oriented towards the improvement of students' learning achievement. A good learning strategy helps students learn the skills that they need. Each learning strategy selected by the teachers should begin with an effort

to attract students' attention and motivate students to be involved in the learning process. Each learning strategy ends with the stage of closing the lesson, which includes activities to summarize the main lessons carried out by students with the guidance of the teacher. Each learning strategy requires a slightly different management system and learning environment. It depends on the situation and the condition of the class at the time.

Conclusion

Student learning outcomes are one of the goals of the learning process at school, for that reason, a teacher needs to know, learn several teaching strategies, and practice them when teaching. To produce high students learning achievement, teachers are required to teach students using the appropriate learning strategies in the learning process in the classroom.

The use of appropriate learning strategies and under the needs of students in school in the learning process can provide students with a good understanding of the learning material and develop their skills. Additionally, it can be said that the increase in student learning outcomes in schools provides concrete evidence of the teacher's ability to manage the learning process as seen from the ability of teachers to apply learning methods used during the learning process, as well as teachers' understanding and skills in applying appropriate learning strategies as needed. This study suggests that teachers should continually improve their ability to select and carry out effective teaching and learning strategies.

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