

Strategies of the English Teachers in Islamic Boarding School (IBS)

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Abstract—Nowadays, learning English becomes a necessity to support the progress of a nation. Finding the best learning strategy becomes a challenge that needs to be answered by English researchers and teachers. Investigating English language teaching and learning in regular schools is very common. This study is intended to investigate and unpack the kinds of strategies that are used by teachers who teach English as a foreign language in Islamic Boarding School (IBS). We used in-depth interview as a method to collect the data. The result of the study showed that teacher education background, enthusiasm level or student motivation, teacher's understanding of the student's character, and norm applied in IBS become the determinants of which strategies that were used by the English teachers in IBS.

Keywords— *Teaching English as a foreign language, language teaching strategies, Islamic Boarding School.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Learning English is no longer an option, but it is a must, where people really need to be fluent in English or at least know passively to support the progress of their lives, especially for those who are involved in education, especially for teachers and students.

Studying English at school is one of the efforts to make students in Indonesia proficient in English. In Indonesia, there are various types of schools, including the Regular School (Public School and Private School) and Boarding School. Public schools are schools operated/provided by the state (government) with all free facilities, ranging from classrooms to teachers paid by the government to provide facilities to the people of Indonesia. While in private school parents of students willing to spend a lot of money that is called SPP every month just to get comfortable learning facilities from school. The last type is Boarding school, which can be defined as a school system with dormitories, where learners, as well as teachers and school managers, live in dormitories within the school for a period of time, usually a semester interspersed with a month's vacation until completing school [1]. The target in this research is IBS. Qamar and Mujamil define IBS (IBS) as "an educational institution which emphasizes in religious subjects and supported with permanent living quarters for its students" [2].

In IBS quality and quantity are well maintained, even above the average of regular schools, "Boarding Schools are usually closely guarded so as not to be contaminated by matters that are inconsistent with the education system or with the hallmark of boarding school" [1]. So the

students are clearly protected from things that are not good or negative, such as cigarettes, drugs, and impressions - less educational impressions.

Because the treatments in regular schools are very different from those in boarding school, it is clear that the strategies used by teachers in teaching are also different, especially in relation to teach English. Strategies include the components used in the teaching process. Strategies applied by teachers in teaching English became one of the important factors to determine the success of teachers in teaching English as a foreign language.

The teacher's understanding of the student's character affects how the teacher chooses the strategy to be used in teaching English. Teachers also should be aware of how effective their strategies are and find new strategies if the old strategy is less precise or less appropriate to the character of their students, causing an inconsistency for students to understand the lesson. Oxford mentioned that teachers should be aware of what styles and strategies that they use in teaching [3].

In this research, we try to find out what strategy is used by teachers in IBS to teach English, so we can know what strategy is often used. It can give the readers insight about real effective strategies to teach English as a foreign language.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many researchers have been researching the strategy of teaching English as a foreign language to improve students' skills in learning English. Wong [4] in Gocer [5] stated that language learning success depends on materials, techniques and linguistic analyses, and more on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom. While Abedini, Rahimi, & Zare-ee [6] and Ratana [7] identify learning strategies as the approaches that influence the result of the learning. The importance of strategy in teaching English is also expressed by the experts through the following statements "The strategy is existent between the methods and techniques". According to this hierarchical order, there is a relationship in which the techniques actualize a method and this method is consistent and accordance with an approach" [8]. Some methods according to Richards and Rodgers such as Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching, the Grammar Translation, the Audio-Lingual, Communicative Language Teaching, the Total Physical Response, the Silent Way, Community Language Learning, Suggestopedia and the Direct Method [8]. Saricoban and

Sakizliin stated that teachers, students, and the environment are integral parts where these parts must be synergistically well so that the learning objectives of English can be achieved [9]. It proves that in addition to using appropriate strategies, teachers are required to create a supportive environment for learning so the students and teachers can achieve the goal of teaching and learning English well.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research is to conduct a case assessment of the strategies that are used by teachers who teach English as a foreign language in IBS. We used the interview as the method of the study. We asked 5 teachers who teach in IBS. 13 questions are given in the interview session. The answers have been noted down and subjected to the content analysis. In the qualitative approach using interview questions to obtain the data. First, the data obtained from the answer to questions in interview form have been put into the tables. In the analysis process of the data obtained by interview, the following symbols were used:

Q₁, Q₂, Q₃.....: defines the questions of the researchers.

A₁, A₂, A₃: defines the kinds of answers and grouping of answer from respondents.

Then coding was done from each answer of questions. Coding itself according to Punch can be defined as an initial and major process for the analysis gravitated towards discovering the content of the data in the qualitative analysis [10]. After the process of coding, deductions have been made by interpreting codes and themes.

A. Factors to Teach English

One teacher feels that teaching is her passion. She loves teaching and doesn't want to search for another job it is no problem wherever she gets the job if she becomes a teacher. Two of five teachers choose to teach, especially in IBS because of the very supportive environment for teaching and learning English, because IBS usually applies the regulation related the languages that are used by their students. In some IBS, English and Arabic become languages that required to be learned and applied in students' daily life. One teacher feels that teaching English initially was just a coincidence, but as time went on he was more enjoying and serious about teaching English.

B. Teachers' Educational Background

Three of five teachers graduated from English Education Study Program. One from English Literature, and one from Philosophy, but both of them are still finishing their study in English Education Magister Program. Some of them also followed seminars to increase their knowledge and sharing to other English teachers about teaching.

C. Classroom Condition

Four of five teachers teaching English in a normal classroom, which means that classroom is used to learn English has the same design as the classroom for other

subjects. While one teacher is teaching English in the special-designed classroom, because in their IBS applies moving class system, but it is different from Language Laboratory. Language Laboratory is rarely used, it just used for listening.

D. Book used in the Classroom

All of the teachers in this research using state book, by the publisher or by the government in teaching English. One teacher often searches for other materials from the internet or other sources. It is perhaps done because there is incomplete that founded in the state book.

E. Grammar Application in The Lesson

One teacher has priority to develop students' ability in English and override grammar so that students do not feel inhibited in developing themselves in English. Two other teachers feel that grammar is also important to be taught. In reading, grammar is important to help students understand the meaning of the text that they read, and in speaking it is important to bring grammar inside, so that, students can understand if they make any mistake and can repair it in another time.

F. Approach/Methods making Students more Free in Developing English Skill

One of the three teachers greatly benefited from the rules imposed by their schools, where students are required to speak English, automatically entering high-level classes they have already used to speaking English and started enthusiastically by showing their proficiency in English. This condition is used by teachers by applying Student Centered Learning in English learning so that teachers only need to direct and supervise the performance of the students. While, three other teachers using many activities to stimulate the students to be more active in learning, both of them are very creative in creating interactive learning material. One of them felt unfavourably with the rules applied in the school where he taught, hoping that the school would adopt other rules that better support learning and the use of English in IBS.

G. Information about Acquisition-Related Matters of Language Learning

All teachers do not explain what the Language Acquisition is in theory and how it can explain the acquisition of an individual's language, but they explain what learning objectives while they go through at the end of the meeting after the lesson is done. According to all teachers here, the learning objectives need to be exposed to the students so that students know why they should study a theme or a topic, and by knowing the learning objectives then the students are usually more cooperative in following the learning process.

H. Strategy to Increase Students' Interest and Motivation in Learning English

One of the teachers looks for loopholes in understanding what students like and use them as a basis for creating activities in the classroom. This is very effective because by presenting material or activities that

students like, automatic desire or motivation of students to be actively involved in learning will increase. Other teachers create an atmosphere that keeps students motivated in learning English through materials from outside of the student self or externally that they creatively develop and give to students so that students are motivated by what their teachers are presenting.

I. Teachers' Strategies to Improve Students' English Skills in IBSs and The Reasons to Choose The Strategies

The first teacher using Student-Centered Learning strategy, this is because of the students is very enthusiastic in performing themselves and show their ability in English. The second teacher is very creative in preparing the material to be taught, this teacher uses Collaborative strategy so that students do not get bored while receiving lessons and stimulate students' curiosity about the activities they will do next material, so they will keep the spirit in following the lesson. The third teacher, understand exactly what the weaknesses of students are on the vocabulary, so the teacher makes Drilling as the main strategy, in order to improve students' vocabulary skills. The fourth teacher is aware of the limitations of time and means of teaching, so that based on the weaknesses he chooses the most beneficial strategies for students relating to their successful exams or evaluations. The fifth teacher chooses the most effective strategy applied to her students in learning English.

J. Strategy Provide Lessons Devoted to Basic English Skills

Various strategies are reflected in activities that are interactively conducted by all teachers in this study so that students do not get bored and can enjoy the Reading, Speaking, Listening, and Writing material. What the teachers did in the classroom include:

- Reading the text and practising questions, Jumble Paragraph or ask students to read a dialogue for Reading Skill.
- Watch and listen to a video and fill in text listening, listen to news, announcements and stories for Listening Skill.
- Making articles on the types of texts, and making conversation text for Writing Skill. Performance and discussion, practice pronunciation through drilling, and demonstrations for Speaking Skill.

One teacher uses K-13 curriculum where while studying a theme, then the four skills can be simultaneously studied. It indicates a structured material arrangement to support the teaching of the four skills.

K. Strategy for Enlivening The Atmosphere in The Classroom and Engaging All Students in The English Lessons

Two of five teachers choose to debate and discussion to get all students in the classroom involved in learning English. While two other teachers find material through the video to make all students focus on lessons and create

games for students to enable all students in the class to be actively involved in learning English. One teacher chooses to use interesting and fun materials.

L. Measurement and Evaluation Activities

One teacher is assisted by the school in conducting the evaluation. In addition, to the daily examination because in her IBS there is a kind of grade upgrading test for English and Arabic so that students' ability in English and Arabic can be measured as well. Another teacher uses K-13 Curriculum (that developed by the government) in teaching and assessing English lesson. While the others, three teachers, use standard evaluations that are implemented covering all skills, both Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking, where one skill and the others are interrelated.

IV. DISCUSSION

In this research, we try to dig information about the strategies used by English teachers in IBS. The IBS was chosen by researchers because the strategy used by teachers in IBS is still rare. One important factor that is rarely realized in the teaching English is the motivation of teachers in teaching English. In his study on teacher's motivation, Sali [11] stated that identifying and understanding teacher trainees' reasons and motivations for becoming teachers are very important for teacher or educators to add new forces to the teaching profession and to impact upon their subsequent professional growth, engagement, commitment and hence their teaching quality [12-14]. In this research motivation of the teachers in IBS to teaching English divided into three themes or reasons. First, passion, for this reason, the pure teacher should have the intention as a teacher, because comfortable teaching then the teacher makes teaching as a profession. Second, comfortable and interesting working. This reasoning leads to an environment where teachers teach. Both the physical environment such as teacher's work environment and the atmosphere within the school. In a study, Oluremi [15] summarizes opinion from Bandura [16], Freiberg [17], Mainhard, Brekelmans, Brok, & Wubbels [18] stated that climate in the classroom consists of various factors, such as the interaction between teachers and students, academic expectations and behavioral, and the physical classroom environment. The third reason is accidental factors. For this reason, the teacher then feels comfortable after having served as an English teacher at the IBS. Evidently, he was able to perform teaching duties up to 13 years until now.

Most of the IBS has applied English culture in daily life in boarding school environment. This condition became one of the factors of English teachers to choose teaching English at IBS. Although there is also an IBS that does not apply the use of English in the daily life of its students. So this affects the learning of English in the school, such as an interest in learning or enthusiasm of students in English lessons, as well as student achievement in English lessons which ultimately greatly affects what strategies teachers use in teaching English. One of the research about the influence of teacher in class to the enthusiasm of student in learning English which state that, "Students' English learning, enthusiasm is closely related

to some personal factors which include motivation, attitude and self-esteem since students' learning enthusiasm is a kind of complex psychological condition," [19].

See the urgency of the relationship between teachers' belief with teachers' education background, the authors feel the need to ask about the background of English teachers teaching at the IBS. The teacher education background also influences the strategies used in teaching English. In this study, there are two teachers who are not from the English department of education. Thus, both are currently studying to reach the Master in English Education majors. Teachers who are not from the education department usually tend to choose using books from the government. While coming from the education majors choose to mix the material with other sources or use books from other publishers. Samad and Nurusu examined the beliefs about the teaching of grammar influenced by their teaching experience, academic background, and location of their school [20]. They proved that there is an influence on teaching, the teacher with a teacher education background which of course influence on teacher mindset.

English teachers at IBS usually get the benefit when their students are required to use English and Arabic in their daily life at the Boarding School. But there is also an IBS, which only obliges them to use Arabic language only without the need to use other Foreign Language like English. For teachers who get benefit from the Boarding School rules in which they teach (the enactment of rules in English in daily life), grammar is usually applied, because the students' enthusiasm to show their English skills is excellent and high enough. As for other teachers in the application of grammar is severely restricted to avoid student aversion or student concerns in showing their English skills. In this stage, the teachers feel that it is very important to build students' confidence that will influence the students' enthusiasm in English.

"English teachers can provide positive feedback such as encouraging and as much praise as possible without sounding insincere" [19, 21]. From these statements, we can see clearly that there is a link between the treatment of teachers to the motivation of students, on the contrary, the level of magnitude of student motivation can be used as a basis by teachers to choose what strategy is best used in teaching English. For teachers with students with a high level of British enthusiasm usually, teachers use the Student-Centered Learning. Others use Collaborative Strategies so that teachers can package material with various activities that are effective and fun for students in English lessons. However, for teachers with students who tend to be passive, it is now an Interactive Learning Strategy as well as a Collaborative Strategy, so that students are encouraged to become more active in English. While Drilling using by some teachers. "Drilling is a technique for teaching language through dialogues which emphasize on the students' habit formation by repetition, memorizing grammatical structures, and tense transformation, using the target language and the culture where the language is spoken," [22-23]. Drilling here used by the teachers to improve students' ability to speak and add vocabulary students.

Four skills are very important in learning a language, Lorena and Sadiku stated that better integration between listening and speaking to reading and writing will make a person a good listener, readers, writers, and good speakers, so as to communicate effectively [24]. For strategies that related to Reading, Listening, Writing, and Speaking skills, English teachers in IBS use the following strategies:

- Reading: Answering questions, Jumble Paragraph or ask students to read a dialogue, reading aloud, conversation with friends, advanced presentations like retelling story, games drill vocabulary, making sentences, describing picture.
- Listening: Listening to news, announcements, stories, watch and listen to a video and fill in text, listening music, or by watching movie.
- Speaking: Performance and discussion, practice pronunciation through drilling, conversation with friends, advanced presentations like retelling story, games drill vocabulary, making sentences, describing picture.
- Writing: Making articles on the types of texts, answer exercise questions and create dialogue, practice makes sentences with Keywords, translating sentences.

The whole strategy is used as an effort to improve the quality of student learning outcomes and the ability of students in learning English at IBS.

V. CONCLUSION

From the explanation that has been conveyed through the discussion above, it can be concluded that there are factors that influence in determining the strategy be used by English teachers, such as teachers' educational background, students' enthusiasm level or students' motivation, teachers' understanding of the student's character, and regulations applied in IBS. English teachers in several IBSs try creative ways to develop the strategies they use in teaching English, yet stagnant strategies are still being used to suit students' needs. It proves that the renewal of teaching strategies, old ways are not entirely unnecessary. Precisely by understanding the character of a student from a school or a class, then the teacher is able to choose which strategy is best used to teach English effectively.

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