



## Teaching Rural Indonesian Schools Students: Effective Strategies

Mia Febriana\* ; Joko Nurkamto; Dewi Rochsantiningsih; M. Rosyidi

Sebelas Maret University  
Email: miafebrianaa@gmail.com

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### **Abstract**

“Building Indonesia from the periphery by strengthening the regions and villages within the framework of a unitary state” is the third agenda of Nawacita (Nine priorities of national development agenda). This commitment reflects the current Indonesian government's concerns that prioritize development in the disadvantaged, outermost, and frontier regions (3T). It is implemented in various programs, one of which is the SM-3T program enacted by the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education of Indonesia. The SM-3T, which stands for *Sarjana Mendidik di daerah Terdepan, Terluar, dan Tertinggal* (Graduates Educating in the Disadvantaged, Outermost, and Frontier Regions), is a year program for teacher education graduates to teach in rural areas of Indonesia. This study aims to investigate teaching strategies used by SM-3T teachers in rural Indonesian school. This research employs a narrative case study. The techniques of data collection comprise questionnaire, in-depth interview, and photo analysis. This study can extend the existing knowledge about ELT in rural Indonesian school, especially teaching strategies, and to improve teachers' professionalism as they could experience conditions in rural Indonesian schools which are different from the conditions in urban schools.

**Keywords:** SM-3T; Rural Indonesian School; Teaching Strategies; English Language Teaching

### **Introduction**

Indonesian government through the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education enacted a program called SM-3T which stands for *Sarjana Mendidik di daerah Terdepan, Terluar, dan Tertinggal* (Graduates Educating in the Disadvantaged, Outermost, and Frontier Regions). This program is a year program for teacher education graduated to teach in rural Indonesian schools. The purpose of this program is to solve teacher inadequacy in the rural Indonesian schools. By sending fresh graduate of teacher education, Indonesian government try to fulfill the need of teachers in rural Indonesian schools. In addition, rural Indonesian schools only have teachers who are low skill in teaching and not competent on creating teaching and learning process effectively for the students. In line with this, Wang (2006) stated that it is difficult to invite teachers to teach in underdeveloped rural areas; as a result, schools in rural areas are left with old and less competent teachers.

Hidayah & Marhaeni (2016), conducting a study that evaluated the SM-3T program in Ende Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia, also reported that due to the shortage of teachers, some school subjects are taught by those without relevant qualification; for example, history is taught by mathematics teacher. The impact of this phenomenon is the material delivered by teachers who are not competent in the subject as they are not the subject teacher, will not be maximal because the teacher do not have the competency of the lesson being taught. In SM-3T program, teachers come from urban area and not yet know the situation in the rural Indonesian schools. These pre-service teachers should be able to find the effective teaching strategies that they can use to teach students in the rural Indonesian schools. In this research, the writer will describe several teaching strategies used by pre-service English teachers who join the SM-3T program.

### ***Theoretical Framework***

Eggen and Kauchak (2012: 5) define strategy as general approaches to instruction that apply in a variety of content areas and are used to meet a range of learning objectives. It means that the use of teaching strategies is important since it helps teacher to achieve learning objectives. In order to achieve learning objectives, teachers can use several strategies, such as questioning and reviewing previous material. Questioning is an effective teaching strategy which can be used by teachers to engage with students and to invite students to actively participated in the teaching and learning process. Besides, reviewing previous material can be used by teachers for checking students' understanding about previous material and for giving students' feedback for their homework.

It is like mentioned by Caro, et.al. (2016: 31), teaching strategies promote students' active engagement in learning and in the construction of knowledge. The teachers' role is to support the process that are necessary for the students to construct knowledge. Teachers has important role on the construction of students' knowledge, and its role can be achieved through the use of teaching strategies. The suitable teaching strategy which used by the teachers is so essential in which the teachers should give an extra effort to find the best teaching strategy to be implemented in the teaching and learning process.

### ***Methodology***

This study aimed at finding out the teaching strategies used by pre-service teachers in rural Indonesian schools by using a narrative qualitative design. Clandinin & Conelly (2000) postulated that "narrative inquiry is a way of understanding and inquiring into experience through collaboration between researcher and participants in the certain place" (p. 2). The teaching strategies used by teachers in rural Indonesian schools for a year are narratively explored. As a narrative study, the stories in this study were collected from eight former SM-3T teachers from each major island of Indonesia, namely Sumatera, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Papua, and Nusa Tenggara. Those eight former SM-3T teachers taught at eight different Junior High Schools in rural area. The techniques of data collection were open-ended questionnaires and in-depth interviews. After data collection, the research data were analyzed by using Constant Comparative Method (CCM). Constant Comparative Method is the process used in the qualitative research in which any newly collected data is compared with previously collected data that were collected in one or more earlier studies. Morse & Field (1998) stated that "each piece of data must be compared with every other piece of relevant data".

## **Results and Discussion**

After collecting the data through questionnaire and in-depth interview, there are several strategies which used by SM-3T Junior High School English teachers in rural Indonesian schools. Dealing with so many problems in the rural Indonesian schools, pre-service English teachers should decide the suitable strategies which they can use to teach students in rural Indonesian schools. Several teaching strategies that used by pre-service teachers are described below.

### **1. Song**

The first strategy used by pre-service teachers to teach in rural Indonesian schools is song. Rural Indonesian schools students are enjoy learning by using song since they can sing and dance together with friends. In some rural Indonesian schools, especially in the eastern part of Indonesia, where the people use songs for the means of worship, using songs as teaching strategies is adored by the students.

One of the respondents mentioned that she decided to use song as a teaching strategy since she considered her students' requests. Besides, her students liked to sing and dance. So, she composed a song that she later used it to teach adjective to her students in the placement school.

Seperti lagu *She is Rina* yang saya gubah itu kan juga saya pakai **untuk mengajari mereka** dan saya tambah **dengan gerakan-gerakan** gitu. Dan ternyata **mereka antusias** (P8, personal interview, 19 February 2018).

[I composed a song entitled She is Rina and I used that song to teach them. I also added body movement on that song. And they were enthusiastic.]

In addition to P8 respondent, P4 respondent also used song as a teaching strategy. This was because the students in her school loved to listen to songs. In order for her teaching to be succeed, she used simple songs, so it could be easily understood by the students.

... saya **sering sekali menggunakan lagu**, karena anak-anak itu **suka kalau mendengarkan lagu**. Cuma ya yang **simpel-simpel** aja Mbak (P4, personal interview, 17 February 2018).

[... I often used songs, because the kids liked to listen to songs. The song I used was simple songs.]

P2 also used song as a teaching strategy for students in her placement school. She combined song with games as a teaching strategy. By combining songs with games, she managed to get students enthusiastic about what they learned.

... ketika di sana itu mereka suka belajar dengan **menggunakan games**, tapi juga suka dengan **song**, jadi modelnya adalah **filling the blank** gitu. Yang seperti itu **mereka senang** (P2, personal interview, 20 February 2018).

[... when in the placement school, the students loved to learn by using games, but also liked the song, so the model of the activity was filling the blank. They liked that (kind of activity).]

From the above description, it is known that the use of songs as a teaching strategy in rural Indonesia schools gets positive response from the students because it is close to their daily life.

## 2. Games

The second teaching strategy used by pre-service teachers in rural Indonesian schools is games. English is a new lesson for most students in rural Indonesian schools. This causes them to prefer learning activities that lead to fun learning in order to easily understand the lessons delivered by pre-service teachers.

The problems were faced by teachers in rural Indonesian schools dealing with students' motivation also influenced the teaching strategies taken by teachers in rural Indonesian schools. Moreover, games were used by teachers in rural Indonesian schools because they can improve the students' enthusiasm in rural Indonesian schools. P5 were one of the respondents who used the games as a teaching strategy after negotiating with their students in rural Indonesian schools. He made a game of dominoes since he saw that his students loved to play cards.

Karena di sana ketika mereka sudah tidak fokus dan tidak mau belajar, **mau dikasih materi apapun tidak akan bisa**. Jadi kalau saya lebih banyak ke **games**, Mbak. Dan yang paling masuk dan mengena di sana itu dengan menggunakan **kartu domino** Mbak (P5, personal interview, 23 February 2018).

[In my placement school, when students didn't focus and refused to study, whatever lesson I gave, it wouldn't be understood by them. So, my teaching in placement school was dominated by games. I used domino card games since they were familiar with domino cards.]

Games using dominoes was used by P5 respondent to drill his students' vocabulary in rural Indonesian schools, since the aim of the dominoes games was to improve the vocabulary of the students in the placement school.

.... saya pikir adalah peluang untuk saya begitu Mbak untuk bisa mendrill vocabulary mereka dari situ. Karena saya pernah menggunakan **metode yang biasa, itu sama sekali tidak bisa** (P5, personal interview, 23 February 2018).

[... I think, it was an opportunity for me to be able to drill their vocabularies by using the games. Since I've used the usual method before, it didn't work.]

In addition to P5, P3 also used games as a teaching strategy by considering the outcomes of negotiations with students in placement school. Students in the P3 placement school wanted a less serious lesson because the students at the placement school were still difficult to study in a serious mood.

... mereka itu pengennya Bahasa Inggris itu yang kayak **games-games** seperti itu. Karena mereka untuk yang **benar-benar serius mereka masih agak susah**. Susah nangkap, susah berinteraksi. Jadi lebih pada *fun learning* Mbak (P3, personal interview, 18 February 2018).

[... they (the students) wanted games for their learning activity. Since it was difficult for them to be serious. They are difficult to understand even to interact. So, the learning activity is more on fun learning, Mbak]

Games as negotiated teaching strategies is seen by teachers in rural Indonesian schools as a strategy that attracts students' attention and improves their enthusiasm in learning English, where English lessons are not common to them.

### 3. *Drilling*

The third negotiated teaching strategies are drilling. Drilling is used by pre-service teachers in rural Indonesian schools to help students memorize vocabulary. Instead of seeing drilling strategy as the right strategy used by pre-service teachers to teach vocabulary, the use of drilling is important to solve the limited dictionary problem in rural Indonesian schools.

... saya melakukan **drilling untuk menghapalkan kosakata**. Karena juga di sana tidak ada kamus ya, dan hanya beberapa saja yang punya kamus, itu dipakainya bergantian (P4, personal interview, 17 February 2018).

[... I did drilling (to the students) to memorize vocabulary. Because there was also no dictionary there, and only a few have dictionaries, it's used interchangeably.]

In addition to P4 respondent, P3 respondent also uses drilling as a strategy to memorize vocabulary. She uses drilling to her students to improve their vocabulary at school, after previously instructing students to memorize vocabulary at home.

... kemudian mereka hafalkan lagi di rumah. Kalau **di sekolah lebih memakai drilling** (P3, personal interview, 18 February 2018).

[... then they memorized again at home. If in school I used drilling.]

Drilling strategy was also used by P9. In contrast to P3 and P4 respondents who successfully used drilling to improve the students' English vocabulary, P9 faced difficulties in using drilling as a teaching strategy for students in placement schools.

Ceritanya saya, saya pernah mengajari tentang ungkapan salam misalnya, itu materi pertama itu *good morning* artinya apa anak-anak. Selamat pagi pak guru. **Saya ulangi mungkin sampai 20 kali**

**ada** pak, tapi kalau saya balik bahasa inggrisnya selamat pagi apa anak-anak? **Mereka tidak tahu, lupa.** Saya sudah coba 20 kali (P9, personal interview, 16 February 2018).

[My story was I taught about greeting expressions for example, that's the first material. What is the meaning of good morning, students? Selamat pagi (Good morning in Bahasa Indonesia), Sir. I repeated maybe up to 20 times, but if I asked what is Selamat pagi in English, students? They did not know, they forgot. I've tried 20 times.]

The difficulty of P9 respondent in using drilling as a teaching strategy in his placement school is more due to student competence. From the interviews conducted with P9 respondent above, it is known that students in the his placement school cannot answer when the position of Indonesian and English is reversed.

#### 4. Translation

The fourth negotiated teaching strategy in rural Indonesian schools is translation. Translation activities are used by pre-service teachers because students in placement schools have not been able to use Indonesian language properly and correctly. So, the strategy is to translate from English to Indonesian language. This was revealed by P4 respondent.

... kadang saya **suruh menerjemahkan** karena kan **terkendala Bahasa** juga. Kebanyakan ya begitu tapi juga saya usahakan praktek juga (P4, personal interview, 17 February 2018).

[... sometimes I told them to translate the text since it was also constrained by the language. Almost all the activity used translation, I tried them to practice as well.]

In addition to P4 respondent, P3 respondent also used translation strategy to engage students in her placement school. P3 respondent used songs favored by students at school then asked them to translate. She used the strategy specific to the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade of Junior High School.

Kalau lagu itu saya pakai untuk kelas dua. Biasanya **setelah mereka mendengarkan** kemudian saya minta **terjemahkan** (P3, personal interview, 18 February 2018).

[I use the strategy for second grade students. Usually after they listened then I asked them to translate.]

#### 5. Dictation

The absence of books as a source of learning leads to the negotiating teaching strategies that use dictation in their classes as a way to deliver the material. Dictation is used by P5 respondent to provide materials in his classroom. However, dictation is not always used, since students in placement school still lay for English lessons, so he must consider the difficulty level of the material he will convey.

Kalau mudah **saya menggunakan dikte, Mbak**, tapi kalau sekiranya susah, saya tuliskan di papan tulis (P5, personal interview, 23 February 2018).

[If the material was easy, I used dictation, Mbak, but if it was difficult, I wrote on the board.]

In addition to the limitations of books as a source of learning, the limited electricity in placement schools also requires P4 respondent to conduct dictation at school. This was conveyed by P4 respondent in the following interview.

Jadi, kalo **tidak ada listrik harus mendikte mereka**, jadi menggunakan dictation (P4, personal interview, 17 February 2018).

[So, if there was no electricity, I should dictate them, so I used dictation.]

## 6. Group Work

The sixth negotiated teaching strategies implemented in rural Indonesian schools is group work. Group work is one strategy in which pre-service teachers divide students into several groups to do the tasks assigned to them. According to P3 respondent, group work is one strategy that make students more motivated in learning English. This was revealed by P3 respondent in the following interview.

... saya juga suka **mengelompokkan mereka ke grup-grup** karena kalau mereka berkelompok itu menurut pengamatan saya mereka **lebih termotivasi** (P3, personal interview, 18 February 2018).

[... I also liked to group them into groups since if they were in groups, according to my observation, they were more motivated.]

The same thing was also done by P4 respondent. Due to the limitations of the dictionary in his placement school, she then grouped the students into group work where it was in accordance with the wishes of students at her school. P4 respondent uses group work to record the vocabulary they learn by placing one dictionary in one group.

... jadi saya **bikin kelompok**, kemudian mereka **mencatat kosakata** (P4, personal interview, 17 February 2018).

[... so I made groups, then they took a note the vocabulary.]

Group work as negotiated teaching strategies can improve students' motivation in rural Indonesian schools. This is because they are excited about doing things together with their friends.

## **Conclusion**

The result of this study reveals that SM-3T teachers who have taught in rural Indonesian schools used several teaching strategies, namely 1) song; 2) games; 3) drilling; 4) translation; 5) dictation; 6) group work. Those strategies were decided by the pre-service teachers to be used in the classroom after they negotiated those strategies with the students in their placement schools.

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