

# Analysis of Teaching Strategies Used by English Teachers at SMKN 2 Tarakan North Kalimantan

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## ABSTRACT

Effective teaching strategies play a crucial role in enhancing the quality of English language instruction, particularly at the vocational high school level where students possess diverse learning needs and backgrounds. The objective of this research was to determine the teaching strategies used by English teachers at the tenth grade of SMKN 2 Tarakan. A descriptive method was employed for this study. English teachers at the tenth grade of SMKN 2 Tarakan served as the subjects of the research. This study focused on teacher strategies for teaching English, particularly reading materials, in the classroom. Data collection involved documentation, observation, and interviews. The research results indicated that the teachers utilized four strategies: scaffolding, team-assisted instruction, question-answer method, and project-based learning model.

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## I. Introduction

Effective teaching strategies are paramount in the current educational landscape, particularly in subjects where student engagement can be challenging. In vocational high schools, English is often perceived by students as uninteresting and boring. This perception can be exacerbated by factors such as class scheduling, making it difficult for English teachers to maintain student interest and ensure effective learning. Therefore, understanding and implementing appropriate teaching strategies are crucial for improving student interest and learning outcomes in English education. Research into teaching methodologies is vital to address these challenges and enhance pedagogical approaches.

Teaching and learning English encompass the mastery of four key skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these, reading is particularly important as it allows students to acquire information and knowledge from written forms and is a fundamental skill for all levels of learning. [1] defines reading as a fluent process where readers combine textual information with their background knowledge to construct meaning. The primary goal of reading is to comprehend the message conveyed in written text. Furthermore, reading significantly contributes to language acquisition, vocabulary development, spelling, and writing skills. Different reading purposes necessitate various approaches, such as skimming, scanning, or careful, deliberate reading, as highlighted by [2]. Despite its importance, many teachers express dissatisfaction with students' English language skill achievements, often evidenced by structural and grammar errors, incorrect pronunciation, and low test scores, which point to poor learning outcomes. A significant

contributing factor to these difficulties is often the implementation of ineffective teaching models. [3] emphasizes that vocabulary mastery is indispensable for language acquisition, and a lack of vocabulary is frequently cited as a primary cause of students' difficulties in understanding English texts.

The recent studies [4] investigate students' interest in learning English as a foreign language [5] and investigate students' interest in learning English [6]; investigate teachers' teaching strategies in EFL class; [7]. explore English teachers' teaching strategies and their impact on students' motivation, analyze teachers' teaching strategies and students' different learning styles in the English teaching-learning process [8]. Besides that, [9] investigate teachers' strategies to develop students' interest towards learning English as a second language. However, in teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), the strategies teachers used are different, and they have influence on developing students' interests and skills.

By implementing appropriate teaching strategies, it helps the students in achieving learning targets and in enhancing language skills. Besides that, by implementing a fun active learning strategy and visualization strategy, students will be successful in sharing their understanding to obtain the goals that need to work together among the students [10]. It is indicated that the students are enjoying, focusing, being happy during the learning process, being enthusiastic and being active in the classroom.

The role of the teacher is highly influential in the learning process, extending beyond student-related factors. The approaches, methods, and support provided by teachers directly impact classroom learning success. Teachers are expected to employ creative methods, motivate students, foster a dynamic classroom atmosphere, encourage active participation, and sustain student interest during learning. Given that teachers play a crucial part in children's education, the methods used to teach English are particularly critical. Various strategies are available for teaching reading, including brainstorming, clarification, scaffolding, question-answer methods, project-based learning models, clicks and clunks, problem-solving scenarios, and producing and answering questions, among others. Identifying and utilizing appropriate strategies is essential to enhance the quality of the English teaching and learning process. This research aims to address the gap in specific, documented teaching strategies employed by English teachers in vocational high schools, particularly concerning reading comprehension, and to evaluate their effectiveness.

This study aims to determine the specific teaching strategies utilized by English teachers at the tenth grade of SMKN 2 Tarakan. The primary research question guiding this study is: What teaching strategies are employed by English teachers for reading materials at the tenth grade of SMKN 2 Tarakan? By addressing this question, the study intends to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on English language teaching methodologies, offering insights into practical strategies that can enhance reading comprehension in vocational high school settings. The findings are expected to benefit English teachers by providing concrete examples of effective strategies and informing future professional development initiatives.

## II. Method

The researcher used a descriptive qualitative method. The participants of the research were English teachers at tenth class of SMKN 2 Tarakan, North Kalimantan. [11] said the research design has a natural setting as the direct data source and the researcher is the key instrument that describe the results with the essential meaning of a qualitative approach.

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Following data collection, the analysis was conducted using [12] theory. This involved a systematic process where the researcher focused on, distilled, abstracted, and transformed information derived from observation sheets, teacher interviews, and teaching documents to reduce the vast amount of raw data. In the subsequent stage, the researcher presented the synthesized data with clear explanations. After a thorough review of the research findings, the researcher was able to draw inferences and confirm the teaching strategies employed by English teachers at the tenth grade

of SMKN 2 Tarakan, North Kalimantan.

Ensuring the credibility and validity of the findings involved the use of data triangulation. According to [13] triangulation refers to the process of validating evidence by comparing information from different sources, such as principals and students. Triangulation is the process of confirming evidence by using different sources, like people (e.g., a principal and a student), types of data (e.g., notes and interviews), or data collection methods (e.g., documents and interviews) in qualitative research. Triangulation, as described by [14] is a data validation technique that involves re-examining or comparing obtained data with external information. This rigorous process was undertaken to ensure and enhance the validity of the collected data.

### III. Results and Discussion

#### A. Results

##### Observation results

The researcher observed the classroom in tenth-grade English classes at SMKN 2 Tarakan, with an emphasis on helping students improve their fundamental English language abilities, including speaking, writing, listening, and reading. With approximately ten years of experience teaching English at the vocational high school level, the observed teacher showed a thorough understanding of the curriculum and a keen awareness of the learning requirements of the students. The teacher was able to effectively manage the classroom and modify her teaching methods to suit the situation thanks to this experience. In order to enhance comprehension and maintain student interest, the instructor incorporated extra texts, articles, and exercises into the official student worksheet textbook, which served as the primary reading resource for the lessons.

The English teacher at SMKN 2 Tarakan regularly used the scaffolding technique to help students with their reading comprehension during the observations conducted in the classroom. This tactic took many different forms, such as when the instructor asked the class to repeat after her while she read a passage aloud with proper pronunciation. Along with guiding students through sentence structures, the teacher provided assistance with challenging vocabulary. During reading discussions, the teacher helped students who had trouble participating more confidently by offering tips and cues. For students with lower proficiency, scaffolding was particularly helpful because it allowed them to gradually comprehend the text with the teacher's assistance before attempting tasks on their own.

Throughout the lesson, the teachers also used the question-answer format to gauge students' comprehension and encourage critical thinking. This tactic was demonstrated when the instructor gave students time to react to direct questions regarding the reading text, such as "What information did you get from the explanation?" While students who struggled received more help, those who answered correctly received praise or rewards. To account for varying comprehension levels, the teacher occasionally reworded or simplified questions. This method encouraged both high- and low-achieving students to actively participate and made sure they stayed focused on the material.

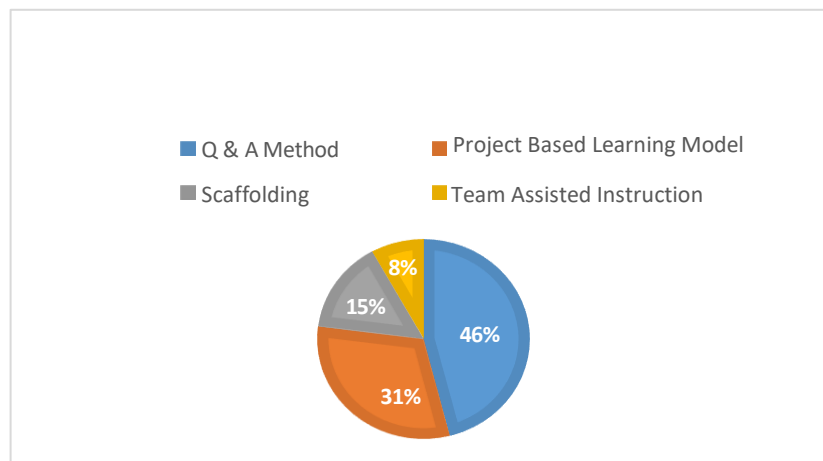
The teacher used team-assisted instruction (TAI) in addition to individual strategies, allowing students to work together with classmates during learning activities. To discuss the reading passage, exchange ideas, and help one another finish assignments, the students were divided into small groups. Peer teaching also took place, with more experienced students helping less experienced ones grasp vocabulary or pronunciation. Cooperative learning was encouraged by these group-based sessions, which gave students the chance to interact socially and strengthen their academic abilities. By moving around the classroom, providing assistance when required, and making sure each group remained on course, the instructor helped to facilitate the process.

Furthermore, the teacher applied the project-based learning model to provide students with real-world applications of the lesson content. For example, after learning the reading material titled "It's Me!", students were asked to present self-introductions in English as a class project. This activity encouraged students to use vocabulary and grammar they had learned in a practical context. In some cases, students were also asked to create dialogues or short narratives based on the reading topic, which they then shared with their peers. These projects fostered creativity, deeper engagement with the language, and confidence in using English in meaningful situations. The integration of various strategies demonstrated the teacher's ability to cater to diverse student needs and learning styles effectively.

Table 1.1 Teachers' Strategies Used in Teaching English at Classroom

No	Teachers' Strategies Used	Examples of Teacher's Activities
1	Scaffolding	This strategy involves providing temporary support to students to help them achieve a task they would not be able to do independently. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Demonstrating how to read a text clearly, then asking students to follow.</li> <li>- Assisting students with pronunciation of difficult words during reading.</li> <li>- Guiding students with vocabulary or sentence structure.</li> <li>- Providing hints or prompts during discussions.</li> </ul>
2	Question-Answer Method	This strategy involves asking questions to check comprehension and stimulate thinking. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Posing direct questions about the reading text (e.g., "What information did you get from the explanation?").</li> <li>- Encouraging students to answer for better understanding.</li> <li>- Giving rewards for correct answers.</li> <li>- Rephrasing or simplifying questions when needed.</li> </ul>
3	Team Assisted Instruction	This cooperative learning strategy involves students working in teams to support each other's learning. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Small group discussions on reading passages or tasks.</li> <li>- Peer teaching to clarify concepts or assist with pronunciation.</li> <li>- Group projects or shared reading activities with a common goal.</li> </ul>
4	Project-Based Learning Model	This involves students engaging in extended, real-world tasks to deepen learning. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Researching a topic and presenting findings in English.</li> <li>- Creating presentations (e.g., "how to introduce themselves in English").</li> <li>- Developing short narratives or dialogues that apply vocabulary and grammar learned from the text.</li> </ul>

Based on the results of the observation, the English teacher implemented the following teaching strategies: 1. Scaffolding, 2. Question-answer method, 3. Team assisted instruction (TAI), and 4. Project-based learning model. These strategies were consistently applied by the teacher when instructing tenth-grade students at SMKN 2 Tarakan.



Graph 1.1 Percentage of Teaching Strategies

The accompanying Graph 1.1 illustrates the percentage distribution of the observed teaching strategies. The graph clearly shows that the question-and-answer method was applied in 46% of the observed activities, followed by the project-based learning model at 31%, scaffolding at 15%, and team-assisted instruction at 8%. These observational findings are further supported by the results obtained from teacher interviews, which confirm the diverse range of instructional techniques employed.

### Interview results

To gain deeper insights into the English teachers' perspectives and practices, semi-structured interviews were conducted. The interview questions were designed to elicit detailed information regarding their teaching strategies, methods for addressing student difficulties, and overall

approaches to reading comprehension. Key questions included:

1. What teaching strategies do you commonly employ in teaching English reading materials?
2. How do you introduce new material and ensure students understand the initial concepts?
3. What methods do you use to engage students and avoid students' boredom while teaching reading?
4. How do you typically train students to improve their reading comprehension skills in class?
5. What is your approach when students encounter difficulties in understanding the English text?

The teacher reported utilizing four primary strategies: Scaffolding, Question-answer method, Team Assisted Instruction (TAI), and Project-based learning model. The teacher elaborated that their instructional process typically involved presenting the material, followed by a detailed explanation, and concluding with an evaluation phase to assess student learning.

Regarding strategies for mitigating student boredom during reading, the teacher explained a specific approach. Recognizing that students sometimes become disengaged when asked to read independently, the teacher would first read the text aloud, then instruct students to follow along. Subsequently, students were asked to read again to gauge their comprehension. The teacher asserted that this strategy was effective in reducing boredom, as it allowed students to hear the correct pronunciation and intonation, which was particularly helpful for those who initially struggled with understanding words. This approach helped students grasp the correct pronunciation and fostered a sense of understanding. It was noted that this method was highly beneficial for students, improving their English pronunciation and building their confidence.

The teacher also emphasized the importance of consistent practice in developing students' reading comprehension. They regularly provided opportunities for students to practice reading English materials, often repeating a cycle where the teacher read first, students followed, and then students read independently. When students hesitated or stopped reading due to difficulty, the teacher would intervene by emphasizing the importance of courage and learning from mistakes. This practice was almost routine in every meeting.

The method for training reading comprehension involved providing students with the relevant text, reading it together as a class, and then having students read it individually. During independent reading, the teacher actively listened and observed, noting words that students struggled to pronounce. These difficult words were typically marked or written down, and the teacher would then lead a class-wide repetition exercise to ensure all students could correctly pronounce them.

When students faced significant difficulty understanding the meaning of a text, the teacher's primary response was to translate and explain the meaning. Students frequently requested such assistance, and the teacher habitually provided translations to aid comprehension, recognizing that many students, especially in English lessons, struggled with direct understanding.

Based on the insights gathered from the interviews, it was consistently found that the English teacher implemented the following teaching strategies: 1. Scaffolding, 2. Question-answer method, 3. TAI (Team assisted instruction), and 4. Project-based learning model. These strategies were regularly employed by the teacher when teaching English to the tenth-grade students of SMKN 2 Tarakan.

## **B. Discussion**

The results of this study indicate that the English teacher at SMKN 2 Tarakan effectively employed various teaching strategies to support students' engagement and comprehension in reading lessons. Among the most conspicuous strategies employed was scaffolding, which enabled the teacher to provide structured and graduated support to the students. This consisted of modeling the reading of the text with proper pronunciation, assistance with difficult words, and sentence construction. These practices aligned with Vygotsky's social development theory: the zone proximal development [15], where students learn optimally when they are led through tasks just in front of their current ability. The teacher's scaffolding technique successfully built student confidence and encouraged gradual reading independence.

The other significant observation was the use of the question-answer method, which was the most common form of classroom interaction. The method was crucial in maintaining students' interest and checking for understanding. The teacher did not just ask direct questions from the textbook but



also modified the questions where applicable to cater to the varied levels of understanding of the students. By praising correct answers and encouraging those who failed, the teacher encouraged a positive learning environment. This interactive method promoted critical thinking and allowed students to engage with the content at a deeper level, a key component of second language learning.

The teacher also included Team-Assisted Instruction (TAI), in which students were encouraged to collaborate in small groups to problem-solve and conduct reading activities. Peer learning was witnessed as students taught ideas to each other, assisted with pronunciation, or discussed reading material. This was an effective technique for increasing the participation of students, particularly students who might have been reluctant to participate on a one-to-one basis. TAI supported the social nature of learning and enabled students to play an active role in their peers' learning, which is advocated by theories of cooperative learning.

Lastly, the implementation of the Project-Based Learning model allowed students to utilize their English skills in meaningful and creative ways. Tasks such as the writing of self-introductions and short dialogues not only reinforced reading material but also helped students to become confident in the utilization of English as a means of communication. These real-life applications not only helped enable a stronger understanding of the content but also allowed students to take personal ownership of learning. The variety of strategies used by the teacher demonstrates a student-centered and reflective approach, rendering learning accessible, interactive, and successful for all students.

#### **IV. Conclusion and Suggestion**

##### **A. Conclusion**

Based on observation data and interviews, the following conclusion could be made that the English teacher of SMKN 2 Tarakan applied a number of effective teaching strategies to enhance students' reading comprehension. The teacher used four primary strategies regularly: scaffolding, question-answer method, team-assisted instruction, and project-based learning model. Both strategies were for a specific reason and were tailored to suit the needs of the students, thus ensuring that the learning space was structured, engaging, and supportive. Both strategies not only increased student engagement but also encouraged autonomy and confidence in using English.

Of these strategies, the question-answer was the most frequently observed, highlighting its role as a mastery technique for maintaining the involvement of students, checking comprehension, and inviting interaction. Scaffolding was also paramount, especially in helping learners with pronunciation and vocabulary issues. At the same time, TAI and PBL provided collaborative and experiential learning opportunities that made reading activity more grounded and relevant to the students' lives. The teacher's capacity to alternate strategies provided indication of high knowledge about learners' learning habits and school life.

In brief, the strategic combination of these instructional strategies positively impacted the enthusiasm and understanding of learners with reading materials. The observations and interviews showed that the teacher's experience and reflective practice were key to the success of the implementation of these strategies. Therefore, these results suggest that the implementation of several instructional strategies especially those that combine support, interaction, collaboration, and practical application is highly effective in teaching English reading competence, particularly in vocational schools like SMKN 2 Tarakan.

##### **B. Suggestion**

The following recommendations are made to increase the efficacy of English language instruction at the vocational high school level in light of the research's findings and discussion: (a) Increase the instructional capacity of teachers. Regular professional development programs that emphasize a variety of teaching approaches, including scaffolding, question-answer techniques, team-assisted instruction, and project-based learning, should be offered by educational authorities and schools. The focus of these training sessions ought to be on real-world applications, classroom management techniques, and approaches for dealing with students of varying abilities. Teachers can create creative, student-centered methods of teaching reading comprehension by incorporating workshops, simulations, and practical exercises. (b) Promote cooperative learning settings.

Schools should encourage a collaborative culture among teachers and students in order to support the consistent use of team-assisted instruction. This entails offering resources that support peer-assisted learning as well as structured guidelines for group projects. In order to exchange

experiences and improve their tactics as a group, educators should be encouraged to share best practices with their peers. (c) Encourage the incorporation of educational resources and materials. Teachers would benefit from having more access to supplemental materials like real texts, online articles, and multimedia resources, even though the primary textbook serves as the basis for instruction. Institutions of higher learning should make sure that instructors have access to carefully chosen teaching resources that engage students and complement curriculum objectives. This assistance can enhance students' motivation and understanding as well as the way project-based learning assignments are delivered.

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