

ANALYSIS OF ESA TEACHING SEQUENCES APPLIED BY THE ENGLISH TEACHERS FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Up to now the results of teaching and learning process related to the students' engagement and readiness to study as perceived by junior high school students have not been satisfying yet. The students' engagement and readiness are not considered as important elements before going through the lesson. Students are mostly considered as empty vessels who are ready to be filled with knowledge by English teachers. As a matter of fact, students need encouraging since at the beginning of the lesson in order to achieve their maximum capacity in learning. Regarding with those important elements, there is an interesting teaching sequence namely E-S-A teaching sequence proposed by Harmer (2007) which can create a very interesting and successful teaching and learning process. This paper therefore discusses the application of E-S-A teaching sequence which includes the students' engagement during the teaching learning process, and the kinds of E-S-A teaching sequences for teaching junior high school students. The engagement indicators identified five criteria such as body language, consistent focus, verbal participation, student's confidence, fun and excitement. The data were taken from the two English teachers as the subjects of this study. The two English teachers' performance towards the application of E-S-A teaching sequence were analyzed and compared. The result of this study presents the students' engagement during the teaching and learning process and various kinds of E-S-A teaching sequence which were employed by English teachers to teach students as appropriate.

Keywords: E-S-A teaching sequence, teaching and learning process, students' engagement.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching a language as a second or foreign language is not an easy job, especially in teaching English subject at junior high school level in which the students are mostly adolescents at the ages of about 12 to 17 (Harmer 2007: 15). The English teachers have to know many things related to the characteristics of the junior high school students in order to have the successful teaching learning process. Adolescents are teenage students usually

called older children who are able to develop greater capacity for abstract thought as they have grown up. In other words, their intellects are somehow starting to take effects and are able to talk about more abstract ideas, respond positively to opportunities and participate in real life situations. Besides, teenage students can comprehend and accept the need for learning kinds of more intellectual things. The other characteristics of adolescents are they are in the process of

searching for their identity and self-esteem and these are many times the result of the student's position in their peer group.

For some years, many experts who have been working on the language teaching methodologies have tried to develop the best teaching method to achieve the best result of learning a language, either for second or foreign language. Yet, talking about the best method in teaching language for either second or foreign language is quite difficult to determine since there are many language teaching methods offered by the experts where every language teaching method has its own characteristics, either the strengths or the weaknesses of which many experts are arguing.

What the language teacher must do is as simple as what Murcia (2001: 10) suggested in her book, *Teaching Language as a Second or Foreign Language*, that a language teacher learn more about the various approaches and methods available as well as to figure out which practices have proved successful in teaching language. Because there are still many language teachers who don't have a sense of history about their profession and they aren't attentive to the details of the historical bases of the many methodological options they have in teaching language subject, especially in teaching English subject, they finally neglect those methodological options when teaching students in English classes.

There are some elements for successful language learning and teaching which an English teacher needs to take into consideration. Those elements are called E-S-A which stands for Engage, Study, and Activate (Harmer 2007: 51–57). An English teacher has to involve these three elements in his teaching practice. They are very essential in English classes for the teacher to think of and construct carefully in designing the English teaching sequence as well as the materials given to his students. The ESA teaching sequence also needs to be adjusted with the students' age, background as well as their motivation in teaching English classes. In other words, these three elements also determine how the output of the language teaching will be.

The use and design of ESA Teaching Sequence may vary. There are three common kinds of ESA teaching Sequences, namely Straight Arrows, Boomerang and Patchwork Teaching Sequences (Harmer 2007; 51–57). The English teacher may choose one which he thinks is useful and endorses his successful language teaching in the English classes. If the English teacher doesn't involve the ESA teaching sequence; for example, the result of the teaching learning process in English classes may not be as successful as when the ESA teaching sequence is involved.

It is often heard that the students are seemingly not engaged in learning English in the classroom. The students are not

interested in joining English lesson possibly because the English teacher's way of teaching is not interesting for them. Thus, the students tend not to pay attention to what the teacher is teaching because they are not engaged emotionally. It is also perhaps the result of what the teacher does at the beginning of the lesson. The teacher may fail in getting the students' interest since at the beginning minutes of the lesson.

As teachers we do not want to see our students sleeping in the class when the teaching learning is lasting. A good teacher must be able to make the students open their eyes rather than close their eyes because of not knowing what is happening in the class or what the teacher is explaining. ESA teaching sequence may benefit the teacher since it helps the teacher try to design the best teaching sequence for a particular purpose of teaching so that the students become more interested in learning and participating not only in the classroom, but also learning by themselves further after school.

English as a second and foreign language

When teaching a language, it is very essential that teachers know the use of the language itself in a particular area in which the language is used whether as a second or foreign language so that they can adjust the kinds of appropriate teaching methods based on these backgrounds. Teaching English in Indonesia is categorized as

teaching the English as a foreign language which refers to the learning of English in a country where English is not the native language and the students are learning English mostly at high school, university or a language school in their own country. In contrast, teaching English as second language means that the learning of English done by immigrants moving to a country in which English is the native language (Paul 2003: 1-2). For example, an Indonesian child who has moved to America with his family is an ESL learner in his English class.

In ESL, learners commonly have more opportunities to use English naturally outside class rather than in EFL, such as when playing with friends, shopping, chatting, discussing, or when living their lives in the English speaking countries. Learners may also have more exposure to English which has very significant effect in fostering their abilities when performing the language, such as when watching TV, listening to radio or just hearing conversations happening around them. In general, when ESL learners have moved to a particular English speaking country and see that many people there speak English whenever and wherever they are, they start to be deeply aware of the importance of English and feel it is natural and extremely necessary to learn it. Yet, EFL learners, on the other hand, seldom feel whether English is either natural or necessary to learn since they tend not to have more opportunities to use English

and in many cases, they have lack of exposure to English because English is not the native language in their country and many times they find it difficult to get exposure to English after the English class dismisses

Teaching English at junior high school

Teaching English to teenagers can be fun, but can also be annoying. It depends on how the teacher views and manages the students regarding with their activities in classroom. That's why English teachers need to know and consider the characteristics of their students. English as a subject matter is managed for developing the four skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing, so the students are hoped to be able to communicate using English in certain levels.

Junior high school students who are in year between eleven up to fourteen or often called teenagers are characterized as adolescent students. Harmer (2001: 38-39) states that there are at least five characteristics of adolescent learners. First, they seem to be less lively and humorous than adults. Second, Identity has to be forged among classmates and friends: peer approval may be considerably more important for the students than attention of the teacher. Third, they would be much happier if such problem did not exist. Fourth, they are likely to be disruptive in class. The last but not the least, they have great capacity to learn, have a great potential for creativity and a passionate commitment to things that

interest them. Yet, the students cannot learn as much as they can if the teacher is unable to provide engaging and meaningful learning experience for them. If they are engaged since at the beginning until the end of the lesson, they will have a great capacity to learn, a great potential for creativity and a passionate commitment to things which make them interested. Thus, the cooperation between the teacher and the students is really needed in teaching learning process in order to make it successful.

One of the teacher's jobs is to provoke the adolescent students in their intellectual activity and creativity so that they are able to express their ideas, thoughts, and feeling freely. Remembering that adolescent students are still in period of change, new experiences, instability, learning many things and often making disruptive behaviour life school, the teacher is required to be more creative and skilful in managing the classroom as well as the learning experience. In this case they need something special in their education. Schools and teachers should provide adolescents with opportunities to explore and experiment in a stable, engaging and supportive atmosphere because they learn new experiences, new roles, and this range of age is one of the most challenging times in life. So they are able to resolve their problems themselves together with the teacher's guidance. After all, they still need the guidance in living their lives until they can stand on their own.

Teaching method

A teaching method is a set of procedures which a teacher employs when teaching. There are at least seven language teaching methodologies the English teacher can choose from as Krashen (1982: 125) states; they are the Grammar-Translation Method, The Audio-lingualism Method, The Cognitive-Code Method, The Direct Method, the Natural Approach, The Total Physical Response and The Suggestopedia. Each of those approaches has its own characteristics; therefore, careful consideration is necessary before it is applied in the classroom. In short, the English teacher needs to know and understand about the characteristics of each teaching method before applying it, both its own strengths and weaknesses which can be adjusted with the students' needs in his English class.

PPP and E-S-A teaching sequence

Every lesson taught in the classroom contains different stages, including English lesson. Many English teachers might have known and used PPP teaching sequence which stands for Presentation, Production and Practice when teaching in the classroom. PPP sequence is one of the teaching sequences English teachers may choose from. But, this PPP teaching sequence seems old-fashioned for nowadays need in learning a language. Regarding with that issue, an alternative teaching sequence is demanded. E-S-A teaching sequence can be one of the alternative to PPP. We can see that this

teaching sequence seems old-fashioned for the present need to learn a language from the following criticisms.

The first, the PPP teaching sequence concerns its focus too much on structures which emphasizes on the accuracy or correctness of forms (the precise delivering of structures and vocabularies) (Lewis 1996 cit. Sanchez 2008: 89). This criticism results in two interconnected consequences which can result in the non-fulfillment with naturalistic learning principles and in a brake upon learners' experimentation with language (Sanchez 2008: 91). The two interconnected consequences contain the learners' embarrassment and avoidance of risk-taking, just as similar as stated by Willis (1993), that these consequences, learners' embarrassment and avoidance of risk-taking, are crucial for the development of their own creation of hypothesis of language system as well as to make them confident to use the target language.

Lewis (1996: 14) also says that PPP gives learners a misleading feeling security with its focus on well-formed sentence-level utterances. He encourages students to use even insufficient linguistic resources to try to communicate real meaning. Then, Willis (1996b) also argues that this model pursues the student's automatic response to the stimulus given by the teacher in which it leads students to believe that the target language is a joint of discrete items which can be assimilated and added to previously learned elements. The rigidity of

PPP's learning path assumes that knowledge is solely acquired through the succeeding phases of presentation, practice, and production. However, as Sanchez (1993) suggests, we have to consider the fact that sometimes we are capable of assimilating new knowledge without any need of practice and without help of explicit explanation.

The next criticism comes from the *practice* phase which is associated with mechanical drills (DeKeyser 1998 cit. Sanchez 2008: 90). Mechanical drills are the object of disapproval due to their lack of similarity to real-life communication because they solely focus on forms at the expense of meaning. They do not allow learners to create form-meaning relationships, which are the foundations of language processing (DeKeyser 2007b cit. Sanchez 2008: 92).

The last comes from pedagogic criticism. It has two aspects. The first is related to the PPP teaching sequence's unnecessary development of teacher control which usually decides what learners can actually do in class because it tends to strengthen teacher's leadership. This can be seen from both in their instructors' management of the class and the way the syllabus objectives are achieved (Sanchez 2004a). The teacher's control is increasingly enhanced due to their role as an informant in P1 and as a corrector in P2. The second is related to its faulty efficiency in its application to real-life communication as stated previously.

Towards this issue Willis (1993) argues that the focus on discrete items presented in isolation as offered by traditional PPP sequences disable learners to cope with real life communication at both perceptive and productive levels.

ESA teaching sequence tends not to be teacher-centered, but student-centered, different from the PPP which emphasizes too much on teacher talk or control to the class. It can also provoke more real-life communication based on particular topics which will encourage students to master the target language as they are engaged with a particular material given to them. The other thing which makes it more interesting to use when teaching English as the target language is the flexibility in using the different kinds of E-S-A stages which differs from PPP teaching sequence that seems to be inflexible because every lesson taught is supposed to follow presentation, practice and production stages. Meanwhile, in the ESA teaching sequence there are some modifications when employed in teaching. The ESA stages are only the default stages. The language teachers may choose one of its modifications he thinks is suitable for their students.

To make the students engaged and interested in English classes is very important. Thus, when the English teacher comes to the English class and is about to start the lesson, he needs to get the students' attention in order for him to be easier to transfer his knowledge of English

to students, contrasted if he doesn't get the students' attention at the beginning and later on will find it more difficult to deliver the material to the students. Making the students interested in learning English means making the students engaged with the lesson. The teacher has to be able to make the students engaged emotionally so that they can get the maximum benefit from the learning experiences. There are some activities and materials which usually engage the students. For example, the English teacher can use games (depending on the age of the English learners and the type of game), music, discussion, stimulating pictures, dramatic stories, anecdotes, and etc. (Harmer 2007: 52). Besides, the teacher can use a more specific game like language game which also has aims to engage and encourage students to use the target language with enthusiasm (Karjo 2011: 3).

We can see some of the characteristics which can show us whether students are engaged or not during the teaching learning process as stated by Jones (2009: 10). The first, to measure whether the students are engaged or not is by looking at their body language. Those who are usually engaged will show positive body language which refers to students exhibit body postures, including eye contact, positions of arms, head position, leaning forward or backward, that indicate listening and attention to the teacher or other students. In other words, those body

movements can show a student's level of interest and attention.

The second is from the consistent focus in which students are focused on the learning activity with minimum disruptions. If we talk about the consistent focus, we need to consider some of these conditions whether students' attention is changed because of lack of interest to the topic, or lack of knowledge of how to proceed, frustration, or some outside distraction.

The third is from the verbal participation. Verbal participation means that students verbally participate during the teaching learning process by answering and asking questions and even sharing opinions or arguments on complex problem. The fourth is from student's confidence. Here students exhibit confidence to initiate and complete a task with limited coaching and can actively participate in team-based work or individual one. The fifth we can see from students' fun and excitement whether students exhibit interest or enthusiasm and perhaps use positive humor during the learning activity.

Study activities are those in which the students are asked to focus on the construction of something whether the language itself, the ways in which it is used or how it sounds and looks. The purpose of study here is to make the students understand about the material given to them. For example the teacher shows students the pictures of some professions like a doctor, a teacher, a farmer, a

businessman, etc., the teacher then has the students say things repeatedly like 'a doctor works in a hospital and he cures sick people'. The purpose in the Study stage is the teacher tries to make sure the sentences are pronounced correctly and that the students use accurate grammar for example.

Activate is the element for successful language learning which describes exercises and activities which are designed to get students using language as freely and communicatively as they can (Harmer 2007; 53). The activities which are

usually used in activate stage include role-plays, advertisement design, debate and discussion, story and poem writing, email exchanges, writing in groups, etc. Thus, to activate the students' knowledge, an English teacher needs to construct interesting learning experience which the students can take advantages of in order that they can apply what they have learned.

To sum up, the indicators of ESA teaching sequence proposed by Harmer (2007) can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1.
Teaching sequence and engagement indicators

| Teaching Sequence | Indicators |
|-------------------|--|
| Engage | 1. Positive Body postures. |
| | 2. Consistent Focus |
| | 3. Verbal Participation |
| | 4. Student Confidence |
| | 5. Student Fun and Excitement |
| Study | 1. Focus on the construction of the language |
| | 2. Focus on how it sounds. |
| Activate | 1. Students use language in speech. |
| | 2. Students use language in writing. |
| | 3. Read/listen for pleasure. |
| | 4. Comprehend the reading text |
| | 5. Comprehend listening text. |

The designs of ESA teaching sequence

There are three designs for E-S-A teaching sequence; they are Straight Arrows, Boomerang, and Patchwork. The

English teacher may choose one of which he thinks that it is good and appropriate for students in his English classes. Here are the examples of the designs of the three

ESA teaching sequences the teacher may take advantages. The use of Straight Arrows ESA teaching sequence when teaching English in the classroom can be seen from the following example.

First, in engaging the students, the teacher shows a picture, or a video about some interesting places to visit for spending their holidays and the teacher then asks the students whether they like or not to have holiday in the interesting places they've seen.

Second, in Study stage, the teacher shows students the picture of a particular interesting place, a beach for example. The students are introduced to 'can' and 'can't' (how they are pronounced and constructed) and say things like 'in the beach, we can see beautiful views around it' and 'we can swim and play sand', and 'but we can't swim too far if the waves are big'. The teacher tries to make sure the sentences are pronounced correctly and the students use accurate grammar. Third, students work in pairs to discuss about the interesting place they want to visit for their holiday. They make a presentation to the class saying what they can or can't do there.

The use of Boomerang ESA teaching sequence when teaching English in the classroom can be found out in the following example. First, in Engage stage, students and teacher discuss about some kinds of foods the students like to eat. The possible questions might be appropriate to discuss are 'When does student usually

eat that food?', 'Where does student buy that food?', 'how much does student pay to buy that food?' By asking those questions, hopefully the students get interested in the topic.

Second, in Activate stage, the teacher describes a purchase situation which the students are going to act out in a role-play. The students plan the questions they are going to ask and the answers they might want to give (not focusing specifically on language construction, etc., but treating it as a real-life task). They then role-play the purchase situation between a seller and a buyer. While they are doing this, the teacher makes a note of a language difficulties they have and particular mistakes that can be worked on later.

Third, in Study stage, when the role-plays are over, the teacher works with the students on the grammar and vocabulary which caused them trouble. For example, students can compare their language with more correct usage and try to work out (discover) for themselves where they went wrong. The teacher may explain what the problems were or refer students to grammar books, etc. They might do some controlled practices of the language.

Fourth, the teacher goes back to Activate stage. Here, for some time later, students role-play another purchase situation about buying not only a kind of food, but also some kinds of foods after they have absorbed the corrections to the language they used last time round.

The use of ESA Patchwork teaching sequence is described in the following example. First, in engaging the students, the teacher tells students about a famous person they might have known. Have the students answer orally the questions related to the description given to them. Second, in Activate stage, they act out a dialogue in pair and the dialog is about their favorite idol. The idol could be an actor, actress, athlete, or other. Here the students are asked to describe the idol they like.

Third, in Study stage, the teacher does a vocabulary work on words such as 'tall/short', fair-skinned/black skinned, 'long/short hair', etc, ensuring that students understand the meaning and the hyphenated compound nature of some of them, and that they are able to say them with the correct pronunciation in appropriate contexts. Fourth, the teacher goes back to Activate Stage in which students are asked to describe themselves or people they know in the same kind of ways as the reading text.

Fifth, the teacher goes back to Study Stage in which the teacher focuses the students' attention on the relative clause construction used in the text (e.g. 'I'm a kind of person who always enjoys movie...'). The use of 'who', functioning as adjective clause, is discussed and students practice sentences, saying things like 'they're the kind of people who like to help others.'

In addition, the use of Patchwork ESA teaching sequence is usually used for intermediate or advanced level. Thus the English teacher needs to choose the kinds of appropriate ESA teaching sequences wisely before using it

METHOD

The research design used in this study was a descriptive qualitative research. According to Creswell (1994: 147) a descriptive qualitative study is a kind of interpretative research in which the biases, values and judgment of the researcher become stated explicitly in the research report. In the same line, Best (1981: 93) also stated that descriptive qualitative study is aimed to describe the characteristics of a phenomenon that exists, opinions which are held, processes that are going on, effects that are evident, or trends which are developing. It is in line with the purpose of this study which aimed to describe, analyze and interpret the phenomena and the processes related to the E-S-A teaching sequence applied by English teachers in English classes that happened during the study. Thus, in conducting the research, the writer used descriptive qualitative method.

The two English teachers at MTs Darul Ulum were observed as the subject of this study and their speech related to E-S-A teaching sequences were transcribed. In order to support the data, this paper also provided video recording as documentation during the application of E-S-A teaching

sequences in the classroom towards the students. During the video recording, students' engagement were recorded as necessary.

The observations were conducted for three meetings to get the complete description of E-S-A teaching sequences applied by the English teachers. The duration of teaching and learning process took sixty minutes per meeting. The video recording was also used to catch unpredicted phenomena during the application of ESA teaching sequence in the teaching and learning process as well as to complete the data after the observation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The E-S-A teaching sequence applied by the English teachers was analyzed based on Harmer's ESA teaching sequence (2007). The students' engagement was analyzed by using Jone's rubric of students' engagements.

This study showed that during the observed three meetings, both Respondent 1 and Respondent 2 applied E-S-A teaching sequence elements in their teaching learning processes differently in every meeting. Even Respondent 1 once applied 2 different kinds of E-S-A teaching sequence in her class. It happened in the first meeting. She applied Boomerang and Stright Arrows teaching sequences. She did so because the first teaching sequence had been finished and needed to start a

new E-S-A teaching sequence to avoid the students' boredom.

The elements of applied E-S-A teaching sequences in this study had met the requirements suggested by Harmer (2007:52-53). In Engage, there are some materials which can be used to attract students attention such as games, music, discussion (stimulating quesstions), stimulating pictures, dramatic stories, amusing anecdotes, etc. Even when those activities are not used, the teacher can deploy written exercise or language students are going to be dealing with by asking them to make predictions, or relate classroom materials to their own lives.

Respondent 1 was better in terms of Engage and Activate stages. To engage and give the students learning experiences, she used more varied activities. For example in the Engage stage, she used stimulating questions which required students' understanding about meanings of English words in Indonesian and the students' answers or ideas towards the topic being discussed. Besides giving the students stimulating questions, she used reading aloud together for the Engage stage. But Respondent 2 only gave stimulating questions which required only the students' understanding towards the meanings of particular English words.

For the Study, the two respondents had applied it well where they had the students focus on the construction of the

language, the ways it was used or how it sounded and looked.

In the Activate, R1 also gave the students more varied activities and sufficient time to activate their language skills rather than R2 did. For example, R1 gave the students learning experiences to practice speaking using role-play and reading aloud individually. In contrast, R2 only gave the students mostly practiced understanding written texts by translating them. The different activities used during the teaching learning process also affected the students' engagement. In R1's class, the rate of the students' engagement tended to be more stabil. The students showed high engagement from the first meeting up to the third meeting.

But in R2's class, the rate of the students' engagement was lesser and lesser. It was caused by the same activities given by R2. R2 gave translation activity very often. Even in the last meeting, there was one student putting her head on the desk while her friends were paying attention to the teacher. But the teacher could overcome this situation well. He came close to the student and had her perform the dialogue he had chosen. Finally she lifted her head and continued to pay attention to the activity.

In addition, the effect of different learning experiences given by R1 could make the students have more abilities in using English. For example, R1 gave role-play in the first meeting. The students could practice speaking and enhance their

ability in both pronouncing particular English words and socializing with their friends by using role-play because they were also required to mimic the situation in the dialogue. That was also why the students got excited when they were required to mimic the situation in the dialogue. They laughed when they saw their partner's mimic when speaking. The next learning experience given by R1 was reading aloud activity performed individually by the students in the third meeting which was meant to know more personally and in detail about how good the students' ability was in pronouncing particular English words. However, R2 only gave translating activity during the three meetings. As the result, this activity only gave the students learning experiences to understand written texts and caused the students' boredom during the teaching learning processes.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the analysis in the previous chapter analysing the E-S-A teaching sequences applied by the English teachers at MTs Darul Ulum Demak, the writer concluded that the teachers have applied the elements of E-S-A teaching sequence during the teaching learning process. They could engage the students during the classes since at the beginning of the lesson and maintain their attention up to the last minutes of the lesson.

The teachers applied varied activities in their teaching sequences. They not only

focused the students on how the language sounded and looked, but also on practising using the language. During the teaching learning process, they could engage the students and overcome the students' boredom effectively. As the result, the students' participation was noticeable proven by their body languages, verbal participation and language performance when the students were asked to do some instructions. For the Activate, the two respondents used different learning experiences given to the students. Respondent 1 used role-play and reading aloud performed individually which resulted that the students got more time to perform and enhance their ability in learning English. On the other hand, Respondent 2 gave only translating activity during the teaching learning processes from the first meeting to the last one. As the result, it caused the students' boredom during the teaching learning process which also decreased the students engagement during the classes.

From the conclusion above, there are some suggestion can be drawn when applying E-S-A teaching sequence. First, Since the subject matter of engaging and maintaining the students' attention has important role in learning, there are some other interesting activities and materials to engage students such as games, music, discussion, stimulating pictures, dramatic stories, anecdotes, and etc. which can be applied during the teaching learning process. Teachers may choose one of

which he thinks is appropriate for students so that the teaching learning process will be more varied and attractive for students. Second, in giving learning experiences to students, teachers should avoid applying the same activities very often when teaching English because students will tend to have less attention because the same activity which are used many times can make them bored and less interested in participating towards the lesson, especially when the activity is applied quite often in short time. Third, every teacher should know E-S-A teaching sequence as recommendation and consideration before teaching in the classroom. It can be very beneficial for teachers because it helps them improve the stages of the activities in the teaching learning process and reminds teachers that students also needs engaging by considering the junior high school students' characteristics.

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