



English Language Teaching Strategies in Developmentally Appropriate Practice

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Abstract

This research aimed to know what are English Language Teaching Strategies in Developmentally Appropriate Practice. developmentally appropriate practice was a learning activity that recognized that each student had different needs and abilities. In developmentally appropriate practice, students were provided with various choices in terms of learning materials, teaching methods, and assessment. The qualitative research was a research design for this research. The study was conducted in SMPN 1. The subject of the research was an English teacher of SMPN 1 Tanjungpinang. The researcher used a purposive sampling technique to select the subject. The researcher only chose an English teacher for the subject of the study because in the school, there was only one teacher implementing developmentally appropriate practice. The research used observation, interview, and documentation as instruments to collect data. English Language Teaching Strategies in Developmentally Appropriate Learning used by teachers were Video-assisted learning (VAL), Picture Stories, Context Clues, and Group-Work strategies.

Keywords: English as a Foreign Language (EFL), English Language Teaching Strategies, Developmentally Appropriate Practice

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I INTRODUCTION

The curriculum was the central guide for all educators, outlining what was essential for teaching and learning, ensuring that every student had access to academic experiences (Brown, 2006). According to Bilbao, Purita P., et al (2008), The curriculum could be both written and unwritten, and it encompassed social behaviors, content, and thinking skills. The curriculum included teacher-made materials, textbooks, and national and state standards, and it outlined the concepts to be taught to students to help them meet the content standards.

The curriculum was designed by an authorized institution with the expertise and capacity to create it. (Maryono, 2022). The curriculum in Indonesia was managed through public policy in the field of education, regulated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of Indonesia. The Indonesian curriculum has been established or modified in the years 1947, 1952, 1964, 1968, 1975, 1984, 1994, 2004, 2006, 2013, and *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Changes in the curriculum in Indonesia resulted from changes in political, social, cultural, economic, and scientific and technological conditions that developed within Indonesian society. . The development of the curriculum in Indonesia was based on the ideology of Pancasila, while the legal basis used was the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. Now, Indonesia implemented the "*Kurikulum Merdeka*" to support the vision of Indonesian education and as part of efforts to recover the learning process.

The *Kurikulum Merdeka* in Indonesia provided teachers and students with the freedom to organize learning according to students' learning styles and abilities. The *Kurikulum Merdeka* was designed to be more straightforward and in-depth, with a greater emphasis on student-centered learning (Freire, 2022). Teachers were expected to be more critical of the curriculum issue and to provide feedback to learners (Of et al., 2022). The curriculum guidelines instructed teachers to use a variety of teaching materials and practices that were appropriate for their students' needs and abilities. (Pratikno et al., 2024). Based on Freire (2022), The implementation of Pancasila values was also encouraged to promote a more inclusive and effective learning environment. The *Kurikulum Merdeka* emphasized the importance of student engagement and active participation in the learning process, allowing teachers to set their instruction to meet the needs of individual students.

One important aspect of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* was developmentally appropriate practice, which acknowledged the individual differences of students and provided learning experiences tailored to their needs and interests. In the assessment, evaluations were also carried out differently. Every student had different strengths and weaknesses in academics. Therefore, assessments were based on abilities and achievements that matched students' needs. For example, if there were students who excelled in speaking and writing, they could be assessed through oral presentations or written assignments. Conversely, if there were students who excelled in problem-solving or practical skills, they could be evaluated through practical exams or projects. By conducting diverse assessments, students felt valued, and their learning outcomes were more accurately portrayed. To customize learning, teachers conducted diagnostic assessments. These assessments enabled teachers to gain invaluable insights into their students' individual strengths, preferences, and areas of growth.

Developmentally appropriate involved modifying various elements of a lesson, such as content, process, product, and learning environment. Teachers could differentiate content by varying the level of difficulty, the type of material, or the method of delivery. They could differentiate the process by varying the activities, the pace, or the level of support provided to students. They differentiated products by varying the type of assessment or the way students demonstrated their learning (Strickland, C. A, 2007). They could differentiate the process by varying the activities, the pace, or the level of support provided to students. They differentiated products by varying the type of assessment or the way students demonstrated their learning. Finally, they differentiated the learning environment by varying the physical or social setting in which learning occurred. Differentiated learning benefited all students, regardless of their ability level. It allowed students to learn at their own pace and level, which increased their motivation and engagement in the learning process. Developmentally appropriate practice also helped teachers to meet the diverse needs of their students and to create a positive and inclusive learning environment. There were some effective developmentally appropriate practice strategies that teachers

could use in their classrooms: 1. Focused on skills rather than content; 2. Used learning stations; 3. Used task cards; 4. Interviewed students; 5. Targeted different senses within lessons; 6. Shared their strengths and weaknesses; 7. Made time for journaling; 8. Used a spotlight system to check for understanding; 9. Pre-taught; 10. Used cooperative learning structures; 11. Offered projects with choices; 12. Used self-reflection; 13. Used tiered assignments; 14. Used flexible grouping; 15. Provided multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement; 16. Used technology to differentiate instruction. It is important to note that developmentally appropriate practice required proactive planning and inclusivity to ensure that the learning experiences were accessible to all learners to meet their learning needs. Teachers could use a combination of these strategies to create a comprehensive and effective lesson plan that met the needs of all students in their classroom.

SMPN 1 Tanjungpinang is one of the schools that implements the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, one of which was by applying developmentally appropriate practice according to students' learning styles, especially in English language learning. SMPN 1 Tanjungpinang, with its uniqueness of students from both private and public schools, was presented with diverse learning styles and abilities among students. developmentally appropriate practice involved the use of varied teaching strategies. Each student had different learning styles, so it was important for teachers to employ various teaching strategies that aligned with students' needs. For instance, for students who were visual, teachers could utilize visual media like videos or images to aid their comprehension. For students who were auditory, teachers could use discussions or lectures to facilitate their understanding. For students who were kinesthetic, teachers could use movements in the lessons, such as activities or direct experiments. By using appropriate learning strategies for students, the learning process was more effective, and students were more engaged in their education.

The implementation of developmentally appropriate practice in English Language Teaching (ELT) strategies at SMPN 1 Tanjungpinang presented several challenges that educators had to navigate. One common issue encountered was the wide variability in students' proficiency levels in English. Teachers often faced the challenge of instructing to meet the needs of both struggling learners and advanced students within the same classroom. Additionally, limited resources, such as materials and technology, could hinder the implementation of developmentally appropriate practice. Furthermore, time constraints and curriculum demands placed pressure on educators, making it challenging to plan and execute individualized instruction. This study focused on investigating the English Language Teaching Strategies in developmentally appropriate practice . The study was limited to teaching reading of descriptive text. Based on the explanation provided earlier, the research formulated the following question " What are strategies utilized by the teacher in developmentally appropriate practice? "

II METHOD

The study conducted descriptive qualitative research to gain in-depth insights into the teaching strategies employed in developmentally appropriate practice. According to Erpina (2021), descriptive research was designed to obtain information on a phenomenon by describing the situations, subjects, behavior, or phenomenon. The study analyzed the data to describe the teaching strategies used by the teacher in developmentally appropriate practice at SMPN 1 Tanjungpinang at the 7th grade.

This research was conducted at SMPN 1 Tanjungpinang in November 2023. The subject of the study was an English teacher of SMPN 1 Tanjungpinang. The researcher used a purposive sampling technique to select the subject. The researcher only chose an English teacher for the subject of the study because in the school, there was only one teacher implementing developmentally appropriate practice.

This study instrument used three instrument; Observation, Interview, and Documentation. A researcher developed the observation checklist and interview guidelines based on Strickland's theory that developmentally appropriate practice involves modifying various lesson elements to accommodate diverse learning needs. These elements include content, process, products, learning environment, assessment, and grouping. The researcher then formulated questions to gather data about implementing English language teaching strategies in developmentally appropriate practice, specifically in content,

process, products, learning environment, assessment, and grouping. To ensure the validity of the questions, a validator reviewed them on a validation sheet.

The study explored the data analysis process for the study “English Language Teaching Strategies in Developmentally Appropriate Practice”. The data analysis was divided into three key components: data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions/verification (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

III RESULT

1. Observation

The first data collection technique used by researcher was an observation consist of eleven criteria to observe what are English language teaching strategies in developmentally appropriate practice . During the observation, two meetings were held to observe the learning process. In these meetings, several findings were made regarding implementing developmentally appropriate practice strategies. The researcher did observation in two meeting at different class. Based on the observations, it can be seen as follow :

| No | Criteria | Yes | No |
|---|---|-----|----|
| A. Content Developmentally appropriate practice | | | |
| 1 | Does the teacher provide different reading materials based on students' readiness levels? | ✓ | |
| 2 | Does the teacher use different strategies to teach the same content to students with different learning styles? | ✓ | |
| 3 | Does the teacher use different strategies to teach the same content to students with different interests? | ✓ | |
| B. Process Developmentally appropriate practice | | | |
| 1 | Does the teacher use different instructional strategies to teach the same content to students with different learning styles? | ✓ | |
| 2 | Does the teacher use different instructional strategies to teach the same content to students with different interests? | ✓ | |
| 3 | Does the teacher provide opportunities for students to work in small groups or pairs to support their learning? | ✓ | |
| C. Product Developmentally appropriate practice | | | |
| 1 | Does the teacher provide different options for students to demonstrate their understanding of the content? | ✓ | |
| 2 | Does the teacher provide opportunities for students to create their own learning products based on their interests? | ✓ | |
| D. Learning Environment Developmentally appropriate practice | | | |
| 1 | Does the teacher create a safe and respectful learning environment that supports student diversity? | ✓ | |
| 2 | Does the teacher provide opportunities for students to work in different physical spaces based on their learning | ✓ | |

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| | needs? | | |
| 3 | Does the teacher provide opportunities for students to work at their own pace? | ✓ | |

Table 1 Indicator of Observation Meeting 1

| No | Criteria | Yes | No |
|---|---|-----|----|
| A. Content Developmentally appropriate practice | | | |
| 1 | Does the teacher provide different reading materials based on students' readiness levels? | ✓ | |
| 2 | Does the teacher use different strategies to teach the same content to students with different learning styles? | ✓ | |
| 3 | Does the teacher use different strategies to teach the same content to students with different interests? | ✓ | |
| B. Process Developmentally appropriate practice | | | |
| 1 | Does the teacher use different instructional strategies to teach the same content to students with different learning styles? | ✓ | |
| 2 | Does the teacher use different instructional strategies to teach the same content to students with different interests? | ✓ | |
| 3 | Does the teacher provide opportunities for students to work in small groups or pairs to support their learning? | ✓ | |
| C. Product Developmentally appropriate practice | | | |
| 1 | Does the teacher provide different options for students to demonstrate their understanding of the content? | ✓ | |
| 2 | Does the teacher provide opportunities for students to create their own learning products based on their interests? | ✓ | |
| D. Learning Environment Developmentally appropriate practice | | | |
| 1 | Does the teacher create a safe and respectful learning environment that supports student diversity? | ✓ | |
| 2 | Does the teacher provide opportunities for students to work in different physical spaces based on their learning needs? | ✓ | |
| 3 | Does the teacher provide opportunities for students to work at their own pace? | ✓ | |

Table 2 Indicator of Observation Meeting 2

Regarding the process of developmentally appropriate practice, the teacher offered various options for students to demonstrate their understanding of the content and to create their learning products based on their interests. Furthermore, from observations, the teacher created a

safe and respectful space in the learning environment that supported student diversity, allowed students to work in different physical spaces based on their learning needs, and enabled them to work at their own pace. Students were grouped based on their proficiency and interests to facilitate their activities.

2. Interview :

The interview conducted on 28th November 2023, aimed to investigate how the English language teaching strategies in a developmentally appropriate practice at SMPN 1 Tanjungpinang. The focus was on gaining insights from an English teacher at the school. The interview The discussion may have encompassed strategies for addressing differentiation learning meet the varying needs of the students. The findings from this interview could provide valuable insights into the practical application of Developmentally Appropriate Practice instruction in the specific of English language teaching at SMPN 1 Tanjungpinang.

Based on interview, it can be seen as follow :

- How long have you been teaching English?

I started teaching since 2012, so it's about 11 years, I think.

- What inspired you to become an English teacher?

First of all, I love English. That's the first thing. Becoming a teacher is... Some people say it a call. But for me, maybe the call itself appeared when I am already a teacher. So when I met the student and I feel that something different that makes me feel teacher is not a bad thing, as I thought before.

- What age groups have you taught?

Most of the year of my teaching experience, I taught in junior high school levels, but I have not some experiences in teaching lower-level students, for example, the elementary schools, also some higher-level students, for example, senior high school students and some others from college when they prepared for TOEFL, and I have got tourist experience. I once thought of what we call a labor man, an old man. An old man came to me, and asked me to teach him English. It is one of the interesting for me.

- What is your experience with developmentally appropriate practice strategies?

Actually, the first real experience started last year when Kurikulum Merdeka is implemented in our school, in my school. I got a new acknowledge about developmentally appropriate practice and then I tried to implement in my classes, and I felt that, Wow, it is a new thing and good I think. For me and for the students. Besides, in my earlier experience in teaching, I always felt that it's not fair for students to be graded in the same level when they have different interests, different capability in English. I think when Kurikulum Merdeka implemented this system, it's a new thing and it is a good one.

- How do you differentiate instruction to meet the needs of students with different learning styles?

So, Because we teach English, so we cannot live our language, the English itself. Actually, I combine English and Indonesian. At first, I usually start with English, and then I repeat the instruction in Indonesian. I use kind bilingual language in my classes.

- How do you differentiate instruction to meet the needs of students with different levels of English proficiency?

Usually, I did some interview with each student. I have to know in what level of proficiency English they are. I checked whether they have started English previously or not. Maybe they have got in their elementary school or whether they have joined English course or not. Then I also checked their kind of learning style. Maybe that's what I did.

- What strategies do you use to teach reading of descriptive text?

Okay. Reading is a tricky skill. For most students who have good capability in English, they will like it. They will did the exercise as soon as possible, as much as possible. But for those who cannot really understand the word, it will be hard for them. But for me, actually, I always said to the student, reading is the easiest one because we just have to check the dictionary and then you understand the text and then you have to answer. That's it. You don't have to think the pattern right. You don't have to think to be or anything else, the grammar, I mean. But still, I think it's because when they see the text, full English text, it becomes like wah bad day, like that. But then I have tracked some traits or strategies. Some of them is

picture box, picture stories like I did in this class, in this previous class. Now we are being advantaged by many sources from YouTube. I found a suitable video so I deliver it in my class.

- How do you differentiate instruction to meet the needs of students with different levels of reading comprehension?

Actually, it is quite hard for me, actually, because they are quite distance from lower level to the higher level. Usually I prepare some levels of material, levels of difficulty, from the easiest one, the medium, and some of the highest level for each class. Because I have no right their prior knowledge about it. So I have maybe I try to expect, Oh, this material can be used in this classroom for these students in this classroom. But maybe this material cannot be used to the students from other classrooms. So, the first one is I have to know the prior knowledge about English from a student and then I decide. My strategy is to prepare more than one difficulty levels materials.

- How do you assess students' understanding of descriptive text?

For the assessment it is how, actually is same concept with the activity self. So, also offer the student what do you want to give to me after I give you the materials. So, they can submit or give the final assignment or final project in various. For example, who lower students' will choose the simple one. Just write simple sentences in written form but for higher students' they usually make a video. The output will be in written and spoken. So in lower student, they choose submit their work in written form and a higher sometimes choose both of written and spoken but sometimes only choose spoken form. But, If they choose the written form, it will be more complete more, long and almost perfect written form

- Can you describe a lesson you taught using developmentally appropriate practice strategies to teach reading of descriptive text?

I have taught about descriptive text and the object that student learn people, animal, things and place so I choose two kind of the object there are people and place. So I deliver the video and then maybe some students' who got hard to understand the video because the subtitle still in English so I prepared picture stories it like comic but it is not like comic because I just screenshot picture from the video and then I compile in the series So it is like a comic maybe but I call they picture stories so the student have lower English comprehension have twice opportunity. That it the material. Then, for assessment activity I give the students' same level difficulty of exercise and they match picture and sentences and after that I gave them variety of activity. So, they have to complete a text. There some text provided with Context Clues and some text are not provided with Context Clues so the score is different. It is the problem because they will, if they felt that i can not work without the Context Clues, they have to choose the one text with Context Clues. And then the score is automatically cannot be the same with the student who choose the text without Context Clues. And then the next level, the next activity is I give them a picture that have to describe. They have choose also which picture, which kind of picture they want to describe, whether people or animals, and then also the different score for each picture they chose because it is harder to describe animals because the vocabulary of animal parts of body is new for some of them, not most of them. So the higher level of student will mostly choose animal, describe animal. But the lower level usually choose people.

- What were the outcomes of the lesson?

The first one I got from what we did today is I'm happy that they are happy. That's the first one. Because in my opinion, when we are happy to do something, I hope what we did is meaningful. That's it.

- In your experience, how effective are developmentally appropriate practice strategies in teaching reading of descriptive text?

It is really takes important part, I think, because for public school like my school, and I think it is the same with another public school, most of the students in some previous years came to junior high school without zero English knowledge. But there are some students who came from private school, for example, they have good comprehension about English. Because in the elementary school, they will talk English. Besides, they also have English school. So there will be a very... I don't know how to explain it. I think that the biggest developmentally appropriate practice from the public school and from the private school. So it has become my first problem when teaching seventh grade. So when Kurikulum Merdeka Implemented Developmentally Appropriate Practice, it give really... It's such a help for me as a teacher.

So I can help the student. I don't have to take all of the student in equal level. So the lower level do not have to feel insecure with their own capability. They have no experience. So what should they do? I think that's all.

- What are the benefits of using developmentally appropriate practice strategies in teaching reading of descriptive text?

Maybe the benefit itself for the teacher, for example, for myself, it make us easier to be fair. So we don't have to set the high score for each student, and then it also makes the students feel more appreciated. So some students who maybe usually in the past time who didn't have good English comprehension will feel underestimated, insecure, and then feel not confident. But in implementing differential learning, I think such of that thing will not happen again, I hope. Okay, so we can conclude that the different section learning can improve their interest to learn English. Yeah, of course, because when they are demotivated, it is the end. They will hopeless. They will not have willing to learn anymore. But if they are motivated, at least when they are well appreciated in whatever they did, and then I saw it myself from my previous students, at least they tried to be my class for mind and body. Not only body is here, but their mind is everywhere. I feel it myself.

- What challenges have you faced when using developmentally appropriate practice strategies in teaching reading of descriptive text, and how have you overcome them?

Okay, the difficulties. The challenging. Actually, maybe I found suitable resources for my students. So it is if I don't have really much time, it is hard for me to just pick one from google. That's become my problem. But because sometimes we don't have really much time to do all from the first. So how I overcame that, maybe, yeah. Finally, I have to do it by myself. I just got, oh yeah, I found inspiration, maybe. I just adjust it to my students' level

During the interviews with English teachers regarding English language teaching strategies in Developmentally Appropriate Practice, fourteen questions were posed, covering four strategies similar the result of aforementioned observation checklist and four aspects of Developmentally appropriate practice. The first aspect focused on the introduction and background to familiarize the researchers with the teachers' backgrounds. The second aspect delved into the teachers' experiences with developmentally appropriate practice, while the third aspect explored how the teachers used developmentally appropriate practice strategies in teaching the reading of descriptive text. The final aspect involved gathering the teachers' thoughts on the effectiveness of developmentally appropriate practice strategies in teaching reading of descriptive text. The questions were designed to gain insights into the application of developmentally appropriate practice strategies in the of English language teaching.

3. Documentation:

The documentation collected on November 28, 2023, consists of Modul Ajar about Descriptive Text and LKPD (Student Worksheets) to understand English language teaching strategies in developmentally appropriate practice with an English teacher at SMPN 1 Tanjungpinang. The Modul Ajar and LKPD covering four strategies similar the result of aforementioned observation checklist and interview guidelines. The Modul Ajar and LKPD are commonly used as teaching materials in the classroom to support student learning. The Modul Ajar is a structured teaching material that contains information, exercises, and assessments to support student learning. LKPD is a student worksheet that contains exercises and activities to support student learning.

English language teaching strategies in developmentally appropriate practice focused on teaching the reading of descriptive text. When teaching the reading of descriptive texts, several implementation strategies could be applied. Content use strategies might have included video-assisted learning (VAL) and picture stories to engage students visually and aid in comprehension. Assessment strategies, such as Context Clues and assessments, could have helped evaluate students' understanding and language proficiency. Creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment was essential, and this could have been achieved through strategies like promoting classroom interaction and providing opportunities for structured and unstructured talk. Grouping strategies, such as group work, could have facilitated collaborative learning and peer support, which would have been beneficial for English language learners. By

incorporating these strategies, educators could have effectively differentiated instruction to support students in reading and comprehending descriptive texts in English.

IV DISCUSSION

Based on the research findings, there are four teaching strategies on Developmentally Appropriate Practice. There were Video-assisted learning (VAL), Picture Stories, Context Context Clues and Group-Work strategies. Video Assisted Learning (VAL) good strategies to teach visual-auditory or highly intelligent students'. It is supported by Tayade et al (2018) stating that video-assisted learning (VAL) accommodates a range of learning styles, it enhances learners' performance. Videos can be as effective as instructors in conveying information or demonstrating procedures.

In addition, it also supports the idea of boukhemis&hamitouche (2022), pointing out the findings of Video Assisted Learning demonstrate that educators and students believe watching videos will enhance learning.

Picture Stories well used to teach visual or low intelligent students'. It is support by Pulungan et al (2022), stating that The development of e-student worksheets in the form of picture stories using live worksheets has been found to be feasible and effective for enhancing student learning experiences. Key points from the research include:

- Picture stories in e-student worksheets make learning clear and interesting for students, leading to increased engagement and motivation to learn.
- A limited trial of the e-student worksheets resulted in a 95% positive response, indicating that the approach is effective in fostering a positive learning experience.
- The combination of interactive student worksheets and live worksheets in the form of picture stories has been validated as a practical and effective method for student learning.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the development of e-student worksheets in the form of picture stories using live worksheets is a viable and effective approach to support student learning and engagement in primary schools.

Context Context Clues assisted students to enhance their language abilities by identifying and using Context Clues in texts to infer meaning. It is promoted by Salim et al (2021), Using contextual Context Clues within a picture of a road sign is an effective way to teach vocabulary and improve students' vocabulary mastery. *Context Context Clues* are hints found within a sentence, paragraph, or passage that a reader can use to understand the meanings of new or unfamiliar words. Road signs can have an essential effect on motorists and function as significant yet often unacknowledged conversation partners. Experienced drivers identified traffic signs better than inexperienced ones when the signs were placed at the expected location. The feasibility and effectiveness of E-Student Worksheets in the form of Picture Stories were determined in an article.

English language teaching strategies in developmentally appropriate practice focused on teaching the reading of descriptive text could be implemented through various strategies. In the discussion of English language teaching strategies within the framework of Developmentally Appropriate Practice, as highlighted by Brown and Lee (2015) and Richard (2006) stating that various strategies to teaching the reading of descriptive text have been identified. According to Brown and Lee (2015), strategies such as Video-assisted learning (VAL) and picture stories fall under the content use strategies in Developmentally Appropriate Practice.

V CONCLUSION

After interpreting the result of this study, it can be concluded that English Language Teaching Strategies in Developmentally Appropriate Learning. used by teacher were Video-assisted learning (VAL), Picture Stories, Context Context Clues and Group-Work strategies. Teachers played an important role in creating a supportive and inclusive atmosphere in the learning environment. They were also crucial participants in implementing various strategies for

teaching English through descriptive text. In addition to these strategies, there were other effective strategies for teaching English language learners, such as focusing on academic language, literacy, and vocabulary, utilizing visual aids, and promoting classroom interaction. It was also important to build relationships beyond the classroom, appreciate the culture of English language learners, and modify instruction and teaching methodology to meet their needs.

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