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UNTUK GURU SABANG - MERAUKE”**



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EXPLORING “SCIENTIFIC APPROACH” IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract: In this year (2013), the Ministry of Education and Culture has just launched a new curriculum for elementary and high schools - Curriculum 2013. This curriculum is claimed to be different from the previous one – KTSP- in several aspects. One of the differences is that “a scientific approach” is introduced. This approach is old and new. It is old as it has been used in science. It is new because it is newly applied in English language teaching (ELT). For language teachers (English), this approach is not clear yet and probably it causes some controversies. This paper aims at exploring the notions of “scientific approach” and its possible application in English language teaching.

Key Words: Scientific Approach, English Language Teaching

The term “Scientific Approach” (abbreviated SA) commenced to be popular when the Ministry of Education and Culture launched a new curriculum (Curriculum 2013) for elementary and high schools to replace the previous curriculum-KTSP in 2013. This new curriculum explicitly claims that SA is paramount to better the quality of teaching and learning. SA is believed to be able to develop students’ affection, skills, and knowledge. SA is also considered relevant with the idea that learning is a scientific process in the classroom. Thus, how learning takes place should be scientific-based, meaning that all processes and steps of learning should reflect fixed procedures starting from observing, questioning, associating, experimenting, and networking.

Teachers and students have been familiar with SA in the academic areas. Teachers and students usually use it as the basis to conduct studies, carry out experiments in the laboratories, and observe social phenomena. In other words, this approach is not new and has been used for years, particularly in the area of science, research, and social science for the sake of finding something new, developing something different, or creating something unique and beneficial for human life.

When I typed key words “scientific approach” in the Google search engine, I found a lot of possible fields that may lead my interests to explore them more deeply. For example, I saw that SA has been applied in psychology, anthropology, sociology, chemistry, research, management, education, international relations, and teaching. These fields show me that SA has been very much accessible in three big domains: science, research, and social science.

In contrast, when I typed the key words “Scientific approach in language teaching or in English language teaching, what appeared was that of the topics such as “teaching science to language minority students”, “effective science teaching for English language education”, “the teaching of science”, “teaching science through English”, and “linguistics and the scientific study of language teaching”. This phenomenon indicates that SA is not yet prominent in the area of language, particularly English language teaching.

These facts show that SA has been popular in science, social science, and management. Probably, SA is not relevant with language teaching, particularly English language teaching, or the researchers are not interested in this area since SA is not really linked to language teaching.

Why Science? Why Scientific?

Before I discuss the notions of SA, I need to illuminate the words “science” and “Scientific” so that we get more comprehensive details about SA. If we are aware of the word “science”, we can ask questions such as “why science?” and “why scientific?” The words “science” and “scientific” are closed in that the latter derives from the initial word. “Science” is a noun and “scientific” is an adjective. As a noun, “science” can be a subject, a course, or a field that one learns, studies, or writes. As an adjective, “scientific” characterizes what one learns, studies, or does in relation to the phenomena.

The word “science” emanates from Latin *scientia*, meaning “knowledge”. The knowledge here may be in the form of concepts, ideas, or formulas. It is the thing a person gets or knows from learning. Science can also be a tool or activity with which a person learns to get or find something new in systematic ways. Science is then a knowledge generating activity which is based on systematically organized bodies of accumulated knowledge obtained through objective observations (The National Academy of Sciences, 2008). Oxford Dictionary (1995) extends the definition of science as the study of the structure and behavior of the physical and natural world and society, especially through observation and experiment. Science is also defined a systematic enterprise that builds and organizes knowledge in the form of testable explanations and predictions about the universe (Feynman, 1968). “Science” is “the intellectual and practical activity encompassing the systematic study of the structure and behavior of the physical and natural world through observation and experiment” (Jay, 1997). In short, science seeks to discover uniformities and to formulate statements of uniformities and consistencies of relationship between natural phenomena. Science is to understand, explain, and predict by specifying the systematic relationships among empirical variables.

The word “scientific” which derives from the word “science” means “about or related to science, or using its methods” or “based on or characterized by the methods and principles of science” (Online Longman Dictionary, 2013). In this context, “scientific” means that any work or result a person achieves must be accomplished by following the principles available in science. For example, when one generated a scientific writing, she/he must have had understood and followed the principles of writing. Furthermore, a lot of words are intentionally combined with the word “scientific” to create an academic image and reflect the principles of science such as “scientific writing”, “scientific observation”, “scientific inquiry”, “scientific research”, “scientific knowledge”, etc. Uniquely, when one’s work is not “scientific”, it is easily rejected and questionable in terms of its design, data, analysis, and findings.

Why are the words “science” and “scientific” used? Why not using other terms such as “sociology”, “biology”, “history”, “language”, and so on? I do not have any references to answer these questions. Probably, I can use my logic to address these issues. When the first person learned, she/he used systematic ways to find something new. Something new here referred to “science” and systematic ways referred to “scientific”. She/he then kept using the procedures in identifying other phenomena or objects and therefore it was called “science” and “scientific”. Probably also, “science” was the first field or thing that was found or studied a long time ago. Hence, anything that is identified systematically is always called scientific. If only the first person found a new thing in language, the terms used might be different: they could be “language” and “language-tific”.

What is Scientific Approach?

Now I come to the notion of SA. What is it? To answer this question, I need to use the definition of “scientific” as explained above. It is “about or related to science, or using its methods” or “based on or characterized by the methods and principles of science” (Online Longman Dictionary, 2013). When combined with the word “approach” or “method”, it will become “scientific approach” or “scientific method”. In this paper, “scientific approach” is the same as “scientific method”.

In the online Longman dictionary, SA is defined as the usual process of finding out information in science, which involves testing your ideas by performing experiments and making decisions based on the results. The scientific method is a body of techniques for investigating phenomena, acquiring new knowledge, or correcting and integrating previous knowledge. The Oxford English Dictionary defines the scientific method as a method or procedure that has characterized natural science since the 17th century, consisting in systematic observation, measurement, and experiment, and the formulation, testing, and modification of hypotheses.

According to Wolfs, the description of SA can be found in “hard science textbooks” which include physics, chemistry, astronomy as well as texts in the life such as biology and social sciences such as experimental psychology. He further explains that SA can be described as consisting of four steps :(1) observation and description of a phenomenon or a group of related phenomena. When an investigator has little prior information, the first step is description. This is the stage when qualitative methods may provide considerable information

about what-is, (2) formulation of a hypothesis to explain the phenomena. Based on qualitative and/or descriptive studies, investigators begin to speculate about which variables might be related to other variables and in what manner (directly or indirectly). In educational research, the hypothesis is often a question about the relationship between or among variables that may influence learning. The hypothesis may be one that merely asks whether a relationship exists (correlational research), or the hypothesis may state a cause-and-effect relationship, (3) predict the existence of other phenomena using the hypothesis, or predict the results of new observations, and (4) conduct experimental tests of the predictions by several independent experimenters who use proper experimental methods.

Scientific Approach in Curriculum 2013

This approach is claimed to be more effective in increasing students' learning outcomes than the traditional one. This approach is also considered relevant with the idea that learning is a scientific process in the classroom. Therefore, SA in Curriculum 2013 must be applicable in all subjects including English. The criteria and the steps of SA in teaching and learning process are elaborated in the following.

Criteria of Scientific Approach

There are seven criteria to determine whether a method of teaching is scientific or not. They are (1) the teaching materials are based on facts or phenomena which can be logically or reasonably explained. They are not based on prediction, approximation, imagination, legend, or myth, (2) the teachers' explanation, students' responses, and teacher-student interaction are not based on subjectivity and wrong logic, (3) the teaching materials support and inspire students to be critical in thinking and analyzing, and accurate in identifying, understanding, and resolving problems, and applying the materials learned, (4) the learning materials foster and inspire students to hypothetically think when seeing diversities, similarities and links in the learning materials, (5) the learning materials foster and inspire students to understand, apply, and develop objectivity and rational thinking in responding to the learning materials, (6) the materials are built on the basis on empirically valid concepts, theories, and facts, and (7) the formulation of learning objectives is simple, clear, but attractive.

Steps of Teaching and Learning in Scientific Approach

There are three points that become the focus in teaching and learning process with SA. They include attitudes (affective), skills (psychomotor) and knowledge (cognitive). Attitudes refer "students know why", skills refer to "students know how", and knowledge refers to "what students know". These three points are expected to make students affective, creative innovative, and productive. In other words, with these three points, students have soft skills and hard skills to live properly. In order to achieve these goals, the teachers follow the five steps in teaching and learning process. They are observing, questioning, associating, experimenting, and networking. Each of the steps is presented in the following.

Observing

Observing is a kind of meaningful learning. Here, students and teachers are provided with objects, real objects, or phenomena. Students are directly involved in learning. It helps teachers to contextualize students' learning in the classroom. At the same time, students can learn based on what they see to construct their knowledge. It also facilitates students to fulfill their need of knowing something. In this context, their curiosity will lead them to the construction of knowledge. Contextually is also present because students can connect what they have learned with what they are going to learn.

Questioning

The second step is questioning. It is a powerful teaching technique that has been used for years since it was firstly introduced by Socrates. Research indicates that questioning is second only to lecturing in popularity as a teaching method and that classroom teachers spend anywhere from thirty-five to fifty percent of their instructional time conducting questioning sessions. Other findings show that (1) instruction which includes posing questions during

lessons is more effective in producing achievement gains than instruction carried out without questioning students, (2) students perform better on test items previously asked as recitation questions than on items they have not been exposed to before, (3) oral questions posed during classroom recitations are more effective in fostering learning than are written questions, (4) questions which focus student attention on salient elements in the lesson result in better comprehension than questions which do not.

Questioning can be used by both teachers and students in the classroom. What are the purposes of teachers' classroom questions? A variety of purposes emerge from analysis of the literature, including (1) to develop interest and motivate students to become actively involved in lessons, (2) to evaluate students' preparation and check on homework or seatwork completion, (3) to develop critical thinking skills and inquiring attitudes, (4) to review and summarize previous lessons, (5) to nurture insights by exposing new relationships, (6) to assess achievement of instructional goals and objectives, and (7) to stimulate students to pursue knowledge on their own.

Associating

The term "associating" used in Curriculum 2013 is more appropriate than "reasoning". "Associating is to describe teachers and students' active participation in the classroom. Of course, students must be more active and are given more opportunities in learning. Associating is the process of thinking logically and systematically over - the empirical facts that can be observed in the form of knowledge to obtain conclusions. In the context of learning, "associating" is focused on students' learning activities. That is why; "associating" is used in Curriculum in 2013 because it adopts the ideas of associative learning theories.

The term "associating" refers to the ability to group diverse ideas and associate diverse events as experiences. When the experiences are stored in the brain, they will interact with the previous events or experiences. This process is called "associating". From the perspective of psychology, "associating" refers to the connection between conceptual or mental entities as a result of the similarity between the mind or proximity in space and time. According to the theory of association, the learning process will be managed effectively in if there is a direct interaction between teachers with learners. Interaction is done through stimulus and response (SR). Thus, the basic principles of the learning process in this theory is an association, which is also known as the theory of stimulus - response (SR). Here, learners' learning process occurs slowly or gradually, not suddenly.

How can "Associating" be applied in the learning process? The followings are the activities the teachers can do. (1) Teachers prepare the learning materials in a form that is ready in accordance with the demands of the curriculum, (2). the main task of the teacher is to give a brief but clear instructions with accompanying examples , either by themselves or by means of simulation, (3) the learning materials are arranged in a tiered or hierarchical , starting from the simple to the complex, (4) results-oriented learning activities can be measured and observed, (5) every error must be corrected or repaired, (6) repetition and practice need to be done so that the desired behavior can become a habit, (7) evaluation or assessment is based on the behavior of a real or authentic, and (8) the teachers record all learners progress.

Experimenting

To get the real or authentic learning, learners have to do experiments. For example, students should understand the concepts of science and its relation to everyday life. Learners must have the skills to develop knowledge about the environment, and be able to use the scientific method and scientific attitude to solve the problems they face in everyday life. The application of experimental methods is intended to develop various learning objectives, the attitudes, skills, and knowledge.

Networking

Networking is also called collaborative learning. Here, collaborative learning is a personal philosophy, which is more than just learning techniques in the classrooms. Collaboration is the essence of philosophy and lifestyle of human interaction that places and facilitates collective efforts in order to achieve common goals. For teachers, the collaborative learning function is more directive oriented in which the teachers are managers in the students'

learning. Here, the students are those who are active. In a collaborative situation, the learners interact with empathy, mutual respect, and receive a deficiency or excess, respectively. This allows the learners to face various changes and challenges to learn together.

Scientific Approach in English Language Teaching

SA in English teaching is new. As I mentioned in the previous section that the topic of SA in English teaching is not found in the Google. Therefore, I say that it is a brave breakthrough in the sense that applying an approach of hard science and soft science into language pedagogy, which has different characteristics, is not easy. It is also a difficult challenge as teachers are not supplemented with adequate examples of implementing SA in English teaching. I can say that Indonesia is the first and the only one country which tries to implement SA in language. In fact, I have not found any sufficient sources to be used in this paper to advocate SA in ELT. The available sources are limited to PowerPoint slides which are given by the Ministry of Education in the workshops and seminars.

Since SA is new, its prevalence is also controversial. Several lecturers in the English Department where I work have different perspectives on this approach. They want to know "why scientific approach? How can we apply this approach in ELT? "What about other methods or approaches in ELT such as GBA, CTL, etc.? Are they scientific or not? If it is possible to apply SA, how can it be technically implemented? Do you think we need to follow what has been used in science? Honestly, I cannot answer these questions since there is no example yet on how SA can be applied in English language teaching. What I can do is to discuss SA from the theoretical perspectives. In fact, SA has been very much used in science, research, and management, but not English language teaching.

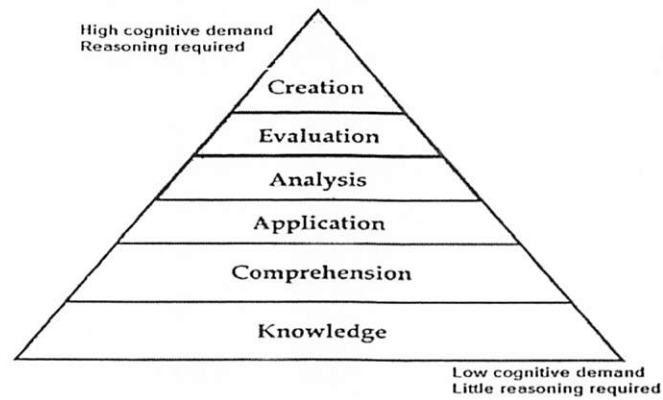
So far, there have been various approaches, methods, and techniques identified in the history of language teaching. They include Grammar-Translation Approach, Direct Approach, Natural Approach, Reading Approach, Audio-lingual Approach, Cognitive Approach, Eclectic Approach, Total Physical Response, Suggestopedia, Communicative Approach, Mimicry-Memorization Method, Pattern Practice Method, Translation Technique, and Question-Answer Technique. Several teaching and learning models have also been used frequently in language teaching which include Three-Phase Technique, Direct Teaching Model, Genre-Based Approach, Cooperative Learning Models, and Problem-Based Instruction.

The question is "will we change these existing approaches, methods, techniques, and models with scientific approach? The answer is "of course not". We cannot do that. English is different from other fields. The way we learn and teach English is different from those in science. Therefore, SA should be seen as steps that can be used in teaching and learning process. SA is not a model of teaching in English. Within these steps, teachers can still use the approaches or methods which are relevant or appropriate with the students' levels and needs.

Examples of SA Combined with Other Teaching and Learning Approaches

The followings are some efforts made in order to make SA compatible with English language. In so doing, SA needs to be combined with other approaches, methods, or theories of teaching and learning which have been prominent in English language teaching such as discovery learning, collaborative learning, project-based learning, Contextual Teaching Learning (CTL), cooperative learning, Bloom's Taxonomy and Krathwohl's Affective Domain Taxonomy GBA, and so on.

Bloom and Krathwohl's Affective Domain Taxonomy



Remembering

- Questions of this level are the most frequently used in the first stages of English learning, because students are at the first level of English language acquisition. Answers to the questions can be made using yes/no or embedded answers. Flashcards, drawings, and realia will help students give the correct answer. Remember (recognition), match, list, sing, color, chant etc. are typical activities at this level.

Comprehending

- At this level students can understand the facts. In primary we use this level of questioning a lot. We ask students to describe, complete, illustrate or draw.

Applying

- At this level students might need scaffolding and word banks to solve several problems by using previously learned facts in a different way. We ask students to choose, construct, explain, organize, plan, select, solve, and identify.

Analyzing

- At this level students have not got enough vocabulary and language to express responses in English. So they will need teacher scaffolding to classify, contrast, categorize, sequence and interpret facts.

Evaluating

- At this level teachers have to modify the language of the questions to be simplified, but the task should remain the same. Some tasks at this level are giving opinions, making judgments about stories, comparing and evaluating the work of classmates in English.

Creating

- Students will need lots of support and scaffolding to answer questions at this level, because they are asked to compile information in a different way by combining elements in a new pattern. Synthesis is particularly difficult. Some tasks at this level are to combine, create, design, develop, imagine, make up, predict and solve.

Five Steps of The Problem-posing Methodology

- Describe the content of discussion
- Define the problem
- Personalize the problem
- Discuss the problem
- Discuss the alternatives of the problem

Sample Activity 1: Problem-posing

Sample activity 1: Problem posing

Topic: Cleanliness

Objectives:

Think creatively and critically

To find solutions to problems based on logical reasons

Task: Based on the picture (a picture of unattended waste bin) given,
 Why are there so many 'things' flying over the bin?
 Where have you seen this scenery?
 Do you feel that this picture reflects cleanliness? Why?
 What is the one thing that is needed to ensure cleanliness in the places that you have mentioned?

Sample activity 1: Decision-making

Topic: Anwar Ibrahim's Corruption Trial

Objectives:

Think creatively and critically

Decision making based on logical reasons

Task: You are the judge for Anwar Ibrahim's corruption trial. You have heard the evidences and closing submissions by the prosecutors and the defense counselors. You have to give your verdict for this trial based on the evidences and submissions provided by both parties. (Note: Teachers need to provide the evidences. They also need to display impartiality on this issue).

But before you give your verdict, consider these procedures:

Can this trial be thrown out? Why?

Does this trial have to go on? Why?

Is he guilty? Why?

Is he innocent? Why?

What is your verdict? Why?

If found guilty, what is the sentence that you want to pass?

SA in Genre-Based Approach

Stage	GBA	SA
BKOF	Presenting the context through pictures, audio-visual material, realia, excursions, field-trips, guest speakers, etc Establishing the social purpose through discussions or surveys Cross cultural activities Related research activities Comparing the model text with other texts of the same genre or contrasting type	Mengamati Menanya Mengumpulkan data Menalar/menganalisis data Mengomunikasikan
MOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presentation activities using devices • sorting, matching and labelling activities eg sorting sets of texts, sequencing jumbled stages, labelling stages. • activities focusing on cohesive devices • presentation and practice activities relating to the grammatical features of the text • oral-aural, pronunciation, decoding, spelling, handwriting or typing practice as needed for the use of the text type 	Mengamati Menanya Mengumpulkan data Menalar/menganalisis data Mengomunikasikan
JCOT	Teacher questioning, discussing and editing whole class construction, then scribing onto board Skeleton texts Jigsaw and information gap activities Small group construction of texts Dictogloss Self assessment and peer assessment activities	Mencipta
ICOT	Listening tasks, e.g., comprehension activities in response to live or recorded material, such as performing a task, sequencing pictures, numbering,	

	ticking or underlining material on a worksheet, answering questions Listening and speaking tasks, e.g., role plays, simulated or authentic dialogs Speaking tasks, e.g., spoken presentation to class, community organization, or workplace Reading tasks, e.g., comprehension activities in response to written material such as performing a task, sequencing pictures, numbering, ticking or underlining material on a worksheet, answering questions Writing tasks which demand that students draft and present whole texts	
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Conclusion

SA is old in science but new in English language teaching. Science and English are different. The way students learn and teachers teach science and English are different. SA in ELT is still blurred. It is not clear yet how SA can be applied in ELT. Comprehensive examples of SA application are available. SA is not a model of teaching, but a set of fixed steps that can be used in teaching. SA cannot replace the existing approaches and methods in ELT.

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IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH STAD MODEL BY USING FLASH CARDS IN CLASS VII A SMPN 1 LANGKE REMBONG

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to find out (i) whether the use of Flash Cards in Students Teams - Achievement Divisions (STAD) facilitates the students' memory to easily recall the words in the context of English language learning at SMP Negeri I Langke Rembong, and (ii) increases reading comprehension. The findings of the study indicate that the use of flash cards in STAD increases the students' vocabulary building and their reading comprehension.

Key Words: Flash Cards, Reading Comprehension, STAD, Vocabulary

There are so many factors that influence the students' learning motivation such as conducive surrounding at home and school's good climate, the students' facilities at home and at school, the teachers' approaches and methods in teaching and learning process. The good atmosphere is shown in better school climates and better relations with schools' administrators and the communities as well as greater parent involvement and parents with high expectations for their children's future educational achievement (Taylor and Pearson, 2002). The use of