

# Teacher Collaborative Mindset in Developing Descriptive Topic in Senior High School

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## Abstract.

The study is aimed at investigating how teachers develop the English material in a descriptive topic by inserting a collaborative mindset towards senior high school students. The study was motivated by the challenging situation faced by Indonesian students. The collaborative is one of the required skills needed in the 21st century. The study was employed a qualitative approach with an analytical descriptive method. Teachers and students of SMA Negeri Jatinangor were selected as a subject of the research by put as an object of the research. The data, then, were collected by using observation, document analysis, and in-depth interviews. The theory of total quality management is employed to depict how a teacher collaborative mindset can improve the objective of the learning activities particularly in the descriptive topic. Credible references are used to analyze the data findings. From the analysis, it concludes that even though the teachers are not familiar with the collaborative mindset in developing material, they believe the mindset is important in improving teaching-learning activity. As an effort to design an interactive and creative learning activity, teachers can make collaboration with other teachers' subjects in the descriptive topic.

**Keywords:** mindset, collaboration, material development.

## Introduction

The global situation demands education world to concern with certain issues. The first issue is learner' skills required in 21st century. Collaboration is one of the life skills should be taught at schools. In collaboration, teachers design teaching method emphasizing the students' involvements. Teachers can make collaboration with teachers from different subject. The second issue is teaching development. Teachers are expected to develop material based on the students' need and expectation. The study found that the class with collaborative skills-based learning model is better than the conventional class in the terms of students' attitude and learning achievement (Rahdiyanta, Hargiyarto and Asnawi, 2016). The role of teacher in a collaborative class plays significantly in managing class activity to obtain the teaching objective particularly in responding the global demand. Collaboration in real life situation is needed when graduates students take part in the company and business world.

In the context of English subject in senior high school, developing materials to be contextualized are required. Students know that learning English is functioned as Halliday suggested (Ahamad, Jauhari, Luddin, Abdurahman, 2019), that is, regulatory, interactional, representational, personal, imaginative, instrumental and heuristic purpose. Regulatory means that language has function to control behaviour of another person or others. Interactional/phatic means that language used socially by the speaker when dealing with others. Representational/ideational means language describes what people say as what people thought.

Personal means that language enables the speaker to assert one's individuality. Imaginative means that language allow our imagination to run wild. Informative means that language gives the speaker the free rein to put one's pieces of information across. Heuristic means that the speaker's inquisitive mind is hungry to be quenched by explanation, truth, facts and figures, information and data.

The problem appeared in English teaching is teachers seem not to respond the new challenges in global perspective. The teaching material is presented what it is. Even the teaching is not student centered. The focus of teaching in grammar and reading which are not contextualized with real life or student's experience. Lot of tasks and paper works are loaded, then students think that language subject is similar with science or exact subjects. The patterns of tense and grammar and vocabulary are memorized without they know how to apply it. Then the issue of material developing, teacher's creativity in craving the teaching design, cannot be ignored. At the same time, collaboration is neglected since the teacher's centered is promoted. The competition is used to encourage students to submit the assignment on time. The students are let alone in completing the homework.

Covid 19 pandemic makes worst the face of education especially learning activities. The online learning cannot substitute the classroom activities. Support system becomes the most barrier faced not only by students but also teachers. Online meeting platform like Zoom, Google meeting seems to be difficult to promote collaborative activities among students. The teaching activities transform to teacher centered. The indication is teachers talking time is higher than students. Lecturing is a dominant learning method. Teachers do not elaborate their activities by using other application. Again, homework and kind of assignment are students' daily activities done by students.

In reaching the objective of language learning, the study is carried out to investigate (1). how teachers develop the English material in a descriptive topic by designing a collaborative mindset towards senior high school students and (2). how students are encouraged to be more active in obtaining the learning objectives. The purpose of the research is to find out how the teacher with collaborative mindset develop the material and to analyze how students are eager to get the English learning objectives. The benefit of the study is served to fellow English teachers who want to promote the collaborative learning in their teaching activities and to develop the teaching material which enables students to reach the learning experience and to the educational institutions which have responsibility in managing the micro educational process.

## **Literature Review**

The theory of mindset refers to growth mindset and fixed mindset. Teachers with growth mindset are open and willing to learn, while fixed mindset tends to refuse something new (Dwek, 1999; Dweck, 2006; Mueller and Dweck, 1998; Kodrat, 2020). In general overview, mindset is comprised by the by the confluence of our beliefs, feelings, values and attitudes, which guide our decisions, behavior and actions in the world. In the theory of transformative learning, Mezirow (2000) explains that someone's mindset can be more inclusive, open and capable of change. Kuhn (1962) reminds that a mindset is not simply like the theory of fashion. It is the complete pattern of thought in which a particular worldview rests. Kuhn makes the point that until a new paradigm is understood, all science and conventional wisdom work to justify and defend the existing paradigm (Paxton, 2010).

The growth mindset is positioned to promote the collaboration spirit. Teachers take their important role as a leader in the classroom to design the collaborative learning activity. Pursuing the collaborative mindset is not easy since people in big cities tend to be more individualistic.

So, it is the teacher's challenge to break out the individualistic mindset to be more collaborative by proposing the argument that collaboration is needed in recent era. Kotler (2012) suggests some arguments to strengthen the collaborative mindset. They are (1). Acute need for information; (2). Capacity to build mutual trust and respect; (3). Willingness for learning and changes; (4). Commitment to navigate chaos and discomfort; (5). Diversity; (6). Invite volunteer; (7). Participative dialogue; (8). Openness to tap other ways of knowing; (9). Authenticity; (10). Belief in wholeness and relationship; (11). Be positive and assume good intention.

To invite students in collaborative activities, teachers share their power at class (Bray, Lee, Smit and Yorks, 2000). Students' centered is promoted, at the same time the teachers are not too dominant at class (Kodrat, 2021). The material developed based on the need of students. In this context, the understanding of quality in education is important. Crosby (1979) states that quality as conformance to requirement. Hence, in the context of quality management at school, there are two important aspects that should be considered, they are (1). A school should respond and delight customer's needs. (2). A school should fulfill not only student's needs but also people's demands. Salis (2002) insists on an available standard in quality management. The standard is used to keep the customers (students and parents) feeling satisfied with the given services and products. Even customer satisfaction should be beyond level what they have expected.

Arcaro (2007) states some principles in TQM. They are: (1). Customers' focus. Students are external customers who directly get educational services, and so do the parents, people, and government. Teachers and staffs are internal customers at schools. (2). Commitment. Quality is not only written on documents or school's billboards. Quality is a commitment and promise which should be realized. School activities do not stick on daily activities or business as usual. It should think about the continuous improvements as a spirit of TQM. (3). Total involvement. Quality is everyone's responsibility, not only the leader. All parts of the organization should care about a quality in their activities. (4). Measurement. A quality achievement will be easier if it is based on quantitative analysis. The activity is measured and compared in every situation and time and is observed how far the quality is achieved. (5). Continuous improvement. In a management cycle, an activity is made step by step, from planning to evaluation step. In an evaluation step, the activity performance is measured and assessed. It will uncover which parts should be urgently improved. All school's activities are evaluated and judged. So, the improvement is focused on a weak part.

Collaboration has shown that although technology is an "enabler" of interactions, collaboration is a collection of human behaviours. What we found most critical are two things: a collaborative mindset and learning how to collaborate successfully. Some of the components that make up collaborative mindset (Kodrat, 2021) include:

1. A focus on "we" rather than "me".
2. Looking at what is best for the group, team or project.
3. Great interactions between team members.
4. Alignment of purpose or goal.
5. Willingness to continually learn.
6. Having an open mind, and willingness to hear from other team members, or experts.
7. Willingness to entertain multiple strategies at the same time.
8. Willingness to learn from past relevant experiences.
9. Not afraid of technology, and willing to use new ones to support interactions.
10. Understanding the proper collaborative tool for different types of interactions.
11. A willingness to enter into and work through conflicts.

## Method

The study employed quality approach with an analytical descriptive method. The subject of research was English teachers in SMA Negeri Jatinangor, Kabupaten Sumedang, West Java. The school is located in Jalan Dr. Soekarno KM. 22 Kecamatan Jatinangor, Kabupaten Sumedang, West Java Province where some prominent universities like Universitas Padjajaran, IPDN and ITB take place in the same location. SMA Negeri Jatinangor has three English teachers. The teachers were interviewed, teaching documents such as syllabus and lesson plan were analyzed, classroom visit was conducted to observe the teaching-learning activities. In the pandemic era, the teachers used flipped classroom. A-half students were sitting in classroom and the rest were at home.

The topic investigated in the study was descriptive text since the teachers discussed the topic when the study was carried out. The students were from 10 graders from 12 classes. The number of students were 432. The data from interview, documents and observation were gathered. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Seven students were randomly picked to be interviewed from science and social class. The teachers and students were asked some open questions dealing with collaborative issues, English subject matters and how the teachers develop the material and motivate students in learning. The result of observation and documents was noted as field notes. The observation was conducted both offline and online. In offline meeting, class activities were observed and taken some important notes. In online meeting, the activities in learning management system and online meeting application were also examined to find how the teachers develop materials and encourage students motivation to work in group. The data findings were identified and classified. Only the relevant data were included in analysis. The theory of education quality suggested by Salis (2002) were employed to obtain the purpose of the study.

## Finding and Discussion

Teaching English with collaborative mindset is challenging. First, commonly teachers use conservative way in presenting their materials. Teachers centered approach is preferred and teachers focus on grammar and vocabulary. Students never know what the language learning is for? In practical use, students are not capable in using English. In teachers' perspective, the conservative way is easy and more practical for teachers. They do need to research the materials which suit for students. Even in the use of on-line learning, teachers just give the tasks or homework. In students' perspective, the conservative way is hard to do. No group work or collaboration happens among students. They tend to be passive and do not understand the material presented by teachers. Second, the teachers take important role to initiate the collaborative learning activities. The teachers should cultivate the growth mindset. After they know the topic should be presented at classroom, they search and think about the method promoting collaboration. Material development is needed. Lesson plan should be arranged to obtain the teaching objective. Third, collaboration activities require the leadership. Teachers take leadership role in front of classroom. The leaders influence the students to follow the instruction.

The finding shows that teachers understand the global demand towards education. 21<sup>st</sup> century skills should be mastered by students. Collaboration is one of soft skills should be practiced in the classroom. The teachers also comprehend that today is the new era when the competition changes. Collaboration is a new form of competition to survive. The learning design highlights the students centered approach. However, from the class observation, it found that students seem reluctant to use English. The short instructions still use *Bahasa* Indonesia,

such as *sudah* (done), *di ke ibu kan* (submit to me), *kumpulkan* (collect it). A teacher also seems not to encourage students to use English when they discuss the descriptive topic among the group.

In reading session, the teacher gives text and students read the descriptive text aloud. After that, the teacher asks students to translate the text. The teacher gives exercise based on the text. Since the text is already translated, the students can answer perfectly. Students use google translation to help them. In the next meeting, a teacher asks students to make a video talking about their village. Students describe their own village and the assignment is uploaded on Youtube. The project is done in group work.

The assessment performed by teachers uses written test and project. In written test, half students (54%) pass the grade. In written test, the teacher gives short and long text with the questions. The common mistakes are that students do not understand the main ideas. They are difficult to answer the “how” and “why” questions which need analysis and synthesis. The specific information can be answered perfectly by students. From the project, all students pass the grade. They collaborate in the skills. In group of four, students divide their task from the student who is responsible with the manuscript until a person who takes the tap and edit the video. The project is carried out together. The collaboration happens and the students are enthusiastic to finish the project.

Students in interview admit that group work is interesting and joyful rather than they work individually. However, they sometimes discomfort when the member of the group is not their closed friends or they have introvert or lazy students. The group work is performed by single person or smartest student in the group. They also acknowledge that they feel free to ask many things to their friends who are smarter or more understand the topic rather than asking to their teacher.

In the perspective of quality management, the teacher should know more about students in their classroom. The understanding of students' condition in the classroom leads to choose the learning method. A teacher can group the students based on their friendship or random. The activity design is to reach the learning objective by making group/collaboration. If the teacher believes that the group based on friendship will distract the learning process, the teacher can choose other technique of grouping. The main point in the activity is, as Salis (2002) and Arcaro (2007) suggested, teachers can achieve two things in learning activities. First, the teaching objective and second is the collaboration.

In the context of descriptive topic, teachers can make collaboration with other subject teachers such as sport teacher. When sport subject topic is about public health, the sport teacher can ask the students to describe the public health center in their village using English. Students only make one assignment for two subjects, that is English and sport. The assessment can be more practical and students will not have many homework if the teachers collaborate to decide the project which can be proceeded by two or more subjects. English description text can be about math or science subject like reading the statistical table and students learn how to interpret the data table.

The English teachers develop descriptive material by considering the test type of national assessment. Indonesian text is not only about general knowledge, social or economy issues, but also the math issue. Students should count the number when they try to understand the text. In descriptive topic, a teacher in science class can provide the environment topic in the text containing arithmetic, chemical bond or biology information. In social class, the teacher can present geography, economy or even history for the text. Then, the English teaching is functioned as language should use, that English is positioned as a communication purpose.

In quality management, the continuous improvement is a quality mindset. The improvement has a pattern, not by accident. In the planning step, teachers do not get used to communicate among English teacher to deal with lesson plan. The document is not reviewed by other English teacher in the context of a material development. The teachers should be encouraged to share the topic which can be collaborated with other subject teachers. Students class 10 have 16 subjects to learn while students in class 11 and 12 have 15 subjects. Imagine if all teachers give one assignment in a week, so students class 10 have 16 assignment and class 11 and 12 have 15 assignment a week. Collaborative in assessment makes students easier to do the assignment.

From the depth interview with students, it is found that pair and group works make students feel more confident. They can ask their friends in group the materials they do not understand without hesitation. If their friends cannot answer, they, together, will ask their teacher. In some cases, students who are shy are motivated to ask questions by taking their friends who have confident as models. In doing the assignment, students in a group are motivated to be proactive. In descriptive topic, the students present the environment in their hometown. Students distribute their job based on their ability. Some of them focus on the camera, content writing, design, audio until the director. They divide their job based on willingness. Motivation is growing when they know that other groups have done their work.

The English teachers, then, should be well prepared to arrange their material. In descriptive topic, in the planning stage, teachers should choose the best method based the basic competence. Teachers can choose the method promoting students' centered approach. Since the competition and individual mindset are shifted to collaborative mindset, teachers attempt to address the objective of learning. At the same time, English teachers find other teachers from different subjects to collaborate with them. Collaboration the subjects between English with different subjects is realized. The teachers should be more careful to examine the basic competences of English and other subjects. In descriptive topic, the English teachers ask biology teachers the basic competences they teach. Biology is presenting the virus structure. The English teacher can take virus structure as a topic in descriptive texts. Students describe a virus structure in English. The biology teacher examines the content including the concept of virus structure while English teachers assess the English competences. Since the students' learning motivation becomes the focus of the study, in the descriptive topic, teachers can expand the collaboration more than one subjects. Students are motivated to explore the challenging topic to be described from different subject. They will explore the information and present in English.

The descriptive topic can be developed by teachers. Some English daily/useful expressions are practiced before the different subject like biology is combined. In many cases, biology teachers do not speak English. It becomes the problem. However, the technique can be used in solving the teacher's language problem. The technique is the teachers give a descriptive text in relation with biology basic competence. The students learn the descriptive text and at the same time they practice biology. The collaborative assessment can be also proceeded by English teachers and other subject teachers. Students explain the virus structure topic in biology by using English. The students' performance can be assessed by both English and biology teachers.

In the quality management perspective, the lesson plan reflects what the teachers are going to do at classroom. English teachers can explore deeply the descriptive topic in their classroom to promote the collaboration. The teacher's mindset of collaboration is emphasized because of the need of external situation and also the hope to create a quality teaching learning activity. As a leader in classroom, the teachers have authority to design a creative method and teaching strategy to achieve the learning objective. Collaboration mindset is used to encourage students to learn English. Students with high motivation and English skills can share their competence

with students with slow learners. Peer teaching happens in the group. The collaborative situation is designed by teachers in the classroom to obtain the teaching objective.

The leaders now focus on promoting the collaborative mindset toward English teachers. The strategy can be initiated by the school principles. Teachers are asked to identify the basic competences of the subjects. From the basic competence identification, teachers think about the teaching method can be performed and collaborated with other subjects. In English context, the descriptive topic can be used to strengthen collaborative skills among students. In this case, the components to make a collaborative mindset should be considered. Some important components like a focus on “we”, great interaction between team members, willingness to continually learn, having an open mind, are strengthened. The teachers have a big responsible to open the students mind about the important of group work.

## Conclusion

From the data finding and discussion, the study concludes that the teachers develop the English material in a descriptive topic by making group work and collaborating with other subjects and students are more active in involving the descriptive topic since the peer teaching happens. it also concludes that even though the teachers are not familiar with the collaborative mindset in developing material, they believe the mindset is important in improving teaching-learning activity. As an effort to design an interactive and creative learning activity, teachers can make collaboration with other teachers' subjects in the descriptive topic.

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