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## Teacher's Strategies in Teaching Grammar in *Merdeka* Curriculum

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### ABSTRACT

*This research aims to investigate the teacher's strategies in teaching grammar in the Merdeka curriculum. This research applied a qualitative approach, more specifically a case study. The research participants were an English teacher who taught in the second grade of vocational senior high school, and the students were from TKR-4 and TSM 4. Analysis of lesson plans, observation, and interviews were employed to collect empirical data. The results of this research were 1) The teacher had applied four strategies to teach grammar in the classroom: expository strategy, cognitive strategy, cooperative strategy, and socio-affective strategy. 2) the teacher's lesson plan was good enough because the lesson plan was suitable for the Learning Achievement of the Merdeka curriculum. 3) Based on the students' interview, the teacher's strategies pretty helped them to understand grammar.*

**Keyword:** *Teacher's Strategies, Strategies, Teaching Grammar, Merdeka curriculum*

### INTRODUCTION

A curriculum is a set of plans containing objectives, body, and material lessons. Besides that, it becomes a guideline for learning activities for the learning objective can be accomplished. Amalia wrote Law Number 20 of 2003 article I in her thesis. The law states that the curriculum is a set of plans and regulations regarding the content, learning materials, and methods used as guidelines in implementing the teaching and learning methods.

It means a curriculum is a necessary tool for Indonesian education. From it, teachers know what kind of objectives should be achieved by the students. Purwasih (2022) said that a good curriculum is one that is established by its era and continues to be created or altered according to the environment and features of participants in order to acquire competencies based on their present and future requirements.

In fact, the purpose of national education is to enhance students' skills and character so that they can become democratic citizens. Because of the purpose, the curriculum needs a change because the challenge is more substantial, and achieving the goal is harder. According to Aslan and Wahyudin (2020), the curriculum must be revised in order to prepare students to compete in the global period, which is undergoing rapid transformations.

The students learn English to produce some sentences in speaking or writing form, and those skills cannot be separated from grammar. According to Foppoli (2022), Grammar is the foundation of a language; without it, any single you know can flow in a jelly-like consistency. In a nutshell, grammar provides you with the structure you need to organize and put your messages and ideas across.

Another statement from Sabirovna (2021), it is stated that mastery of the precise grammatical structure assists students in recognizing between their own language and the target language. MacMillan (2017) noted that grammar gives the principles for the daily usage of spoken and written language so that one can communicate more effectively. It is very obvious that grammar has a vital role in English.

The students can deliver their ideas in writing or speaking form through grammar. When they know the difference in grammar structure between their mother tongue and the target language, and the grammar rules, they can be aware of mistakes in using English. English grammar has different structures from students' mother tongue, which can confuse the students and make it challenging to learn grammar.

According to Komara and Tiarsiwi (2021), due to the number of resources, regulations, and formula students should learn, assessing their level

of competency and motivation, if they had it or not, was difficult for EFL students. And also, it was discovered that grammatical issues were associated to the knowledge and influence of L1 and L2 competence, the difficulty of grammatical structures, factors of learners and lecturers, and the inferior standard of student textbooks (Alhaysony and Alhaisoni, 2017).

The reasons make sense if Indonesian students often make errors in arranging English grammar. Another research result was from Spahiu and Kryeziu (2021), who researched Albanian EFL students. Interlingual errors occurred due to the Interference of L1 (Albanian) into L2 (English), while intralingual errors were caused by overgeneralization, insufficient execution of rules, awareness of regulation restriction, and incorrectly hypothesized ideas.

Also, in Napitupulu's (2017) research, students' errors are most likely due to L1 transfer. Students tend to rely on their mother tongue in expressing their ideas which causes them to make wrong word choices and sentence structure. Because the students often tend to transfer their mother tongue to the English language, some students are still confused about understanding grammar formulas. Teachers should try hard to teach the students grammar to help them understand grammar.

In the learning process, the teachers must employ a strategy. The use of teaching strategies is to aid pupils in the learning process. It plays a crucial part in facilitating students' learning. They will select the instructional method most suited to the topic being studied. It implies that the teaching approach and how the teaching-learning process utilized to achieve educational objectives are interrelated.

Souisa and Yanuarius (2020) discovered that the invention of approaches, strategies, and methods for teaching grammar is various and depending on the qualities of the grammatical material. It implies that teachers are accountable for implementing instructional strategies. Teachers must be able to develop students' skills through the use of design. Because the systems have advantages and disadvantages, teachers must be careful when selecting a learning plan.

There are numerous teaching-learning strategies that educators can use to inspire students' style of learning (Bibi et al., 2022). Mizan (2022) stated that educational research is a

concerted endeavor to gain a deeper comprehension of the educational process, hence boosting its overall effectiveness.

In addition, Basu and Trainee's (2020) research in Education promotes a much better and simpler comprehension of any issue and its underlying principles, resulting in the creation of interesting questions and the creation of new theories in any field. It can be concluded that educational research is essential for teachers. Because of it, they can get good information and a better understanding, leading to questions so they will find new theories of any subject.

Hence, teaching strategies research is essential for teachers. Research provides educators with valuable information about how students learn best to be more effective teachers. Besides that, it also enables teachers build new strategies and teaching methods and gives them the opportunity to examine various topics and concepts in more depth (Winstead, 2022).

On the other hand, Adji and Meilawati (2020) conducted research related to teaching strategies they discovered that learning techniques contribute to learning success and enhance the learning process. Students' ideas can be improved through the use of learning strategies. This indicates that if a researcher investigates teaching tactics, teachers will be able to enhance or implement the strategy with their pupils.

In 2022, the government authorized the Merdeka curriculum in Indonesia, and some schools have already applied it in their school but just for X classes. Because X class is a new school academic year, this grade has new students who have not experienced the 2013 curriculum. The 2013 and Merdeka curricula have some differences; one is grammar.

In the 2013 curriculum, the teacher can teach grammar separately, but it cannot be done in the Merdeka curriculum. The teacher must integrate grammar with other English skills. English grammar is very different from Indonesian grammar; Indonesian students rarely speak English daily, making it difficult to understand grammar. This is the reason grammar considers the most complicated part of English for students.

A teacher must have some strategies in teaching grammar to help the students understand grammar; at least they know the distinction between simple present and past tense. Moreover, the Merdeka curriculum does not allow the teacher

to teach grammar only. Based on the explanation above, it is essential to do such research because the Merdeka curriculum is new in Indonesia, so teachers have to find the appropriate technique to teach grammar to the students.

Therefore, the researcher wants to investigate the teacher's strategies in teaching grammar entitled "Teachers' Strategies in Teaching Grammar in the Merdeka curriculum."

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research design is the approach that the researcher selects for accumulating and analyzing data. this research applied qualitative method; the data was descriptive analysis. The descriptive approach indicates that the data is presented as words or an explanation. The descriptive method is a methodology used to describe, analyze, and categorize something using tools such as surveys, observation, questionnaires, interviews, and text (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1999).

Precisely, this research is a case study. The researcher conducted this research in the XI class as the participants of this research because they had studied English longer than the X class. Besides that, SMK 2 Muhammadiyah Ajibarang applied the Merdeka curriculum in the XI class. The researcher did not research all of the second grades but selected the classes randomly to TKR-4 and TSM-4 as the subject of this research.

The researcher decided in those classes because the teacher recommended them. To collect the data, the researcher used Lesson Plan, Observation, and Interview

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The result of data analysis was collected from the study of a document, observation, and interview. The data was collected by analyzing a lesson plan to know the teacher's strategies in teaching grammar contextually in accordance to Merdeka curriculum. The next step, the researcher observed the teacher's strategy in teaching grammar in the class to know what kind of strategies and how they were applied in the teaching-learning process.

The class observation was done to know whether the lesson plans was completely or partly applied in teaching. Besides doing observation, the researcher interviewed the teacher to confirm and clarify what his opinion about grammar in learning English and also how to overcome the

students' problems in the class. To complete the research data, some students were interviewed in order to know whether the strategy used by the teacher gave an impact to their understanding.

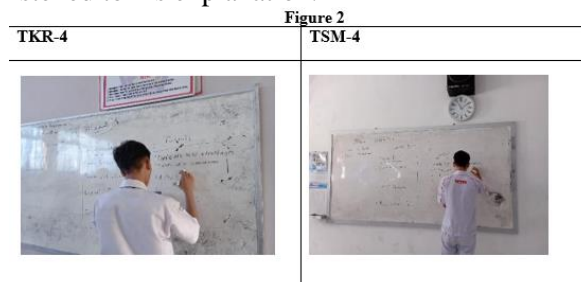
1. The teacher's strategies in teaching grammar contextually in the Merdeka curriculum. Observing the teacher's teaching in the class can help the researcher know what strategies he used. He applied four strategies in both classrooms. They are:



**Figure 1.** Expository learning strategies

According to the observation in the class, the teacher explained the material to the students. The material was about the generic structure and the language features of the text. After explaining the generic structure, he explained the language features of the text in detail in front of the class, and the students received the information.

Masitoh (2017) said that expository learning strategies stress the teacher's speech presentation of knowledge to a group of students to obtain full topic understanding. It was approved that the teacher used this strategy because he explained the material in front of the student, and the students listened to his explanation.



**Figure 2.** Cognitive strategies

Mahdin (2019) stated that practice, receiving and passing information, processing and thinking, and arranging input and output are examples of cognitive strategies. These abilities are used to acquire and retain knowledge. After the teacher explained the language features to the students, he gave them a narrative text via WhatsApp group

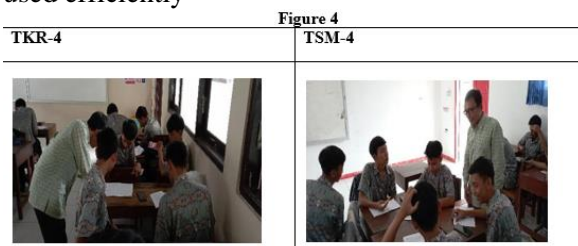
then the students were asked to read the text first. They had to find the language features such as: Simple past tense (nominal and verbal sentences), adverb of time, time conjunction, specific characters, action verb, and direct speech. The teacher applied this strategy in TKR-4 and TSM- Giving a task to the students can measure the students' understanding about grammar.



**Figure 3.** Cooperative learning

Based on the observation, the teacher applied a cooperative strategy. He asked the students to finish the assignment in groups which consisted of four students. Cooperative learning is a set of activities in which students of diverse abilities collaborate to accomplish specific learning objectives (Namaziandost et al., 2020). It is line with Johnson and Johnson (2018) cooperatively performing with peers and embracing teamwork improves personal wellness and self-confidence.

Doing the assignment in a group, the researcher observed that some students shared their own opinions about the answer of the language features; besides that, the researcher found a student who explained the language features to two of his member group. The teacher does not always ask the students to finish an assignment in groups; it depends on the task's difficulty. Grouping can benefit the students because their burden will reduce, and time can be used efficiently



**Figure 4.** Socio-affective strategies

Based on the observation, the teacher applied this strategy as well in the classroom, because, when they were doubt with the answer, a

group would not hesitate to ask a help to the teacher, whether their answer was correct or wrong; and he was not hesitating to guide them to find the correct answer. Besides that, when a group of students were still confused about grammar, the teacher explained it again and gave an example to them.

The example based on real-life situation to make the students understand about grammar. It is line with Syafri (2016) this strategy fosters a sense of empathy between the teacher and pupil. It is facilitated by taking into account things like emotions and attitudes From the explanation, the researcher considers, he applied this strategy to the students. Because the teacher showed the sense of empathy to the students who wants to understand grammar and he was ready to explain again if there were some students who did not understand it.

2. The implementation of the strategies in the classroom. The data exposure from the lesson plan document was made by the English teacher grade eleventh vocational school 2 of Muhammadiyah Ajibarang. The content analysis was checked several times by giving a checklist of each item based on the blueprint lesson plan. A content analysis supported by a document study was utilized to determine the purpose of the study.

As this was a qualitative study, the researcher reported the results of the content analysis checklist and document using words and descriptions. The lesson plan can be seen in appendix A. The findings were displayed under the subtopics listed below. Based on the lesson plan analysis, the teacher's lesson plan followed the Merdeka curriculum.

Based on the learning achievements (Capaian Pembelajaran) in the F phase, which means XI class, the students can understand the main idea of a text. Besides that, the students are expected to be able to produce a text with a clear and detailed structure of the organization. One of the kinds of text which should be taught to the students is narrative text. In the lesson plan, the teacher selected a narrative text for that day.

In the basic competence of the lesson plan, before entering narrative text, the students were expected to have information on how to arrange a sentence and understand to find the main idea of a paragraph. The teacher not only should improve the students' skill but the teacher must embody Profil Pelajar Pancasila, which contains critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, and

confidence.

In the lesson plan, the teacher wrote, so in the learning activity, the students were expected to have critical thinking, collaborative, creative, and independent. The teacher wrote two points in the core competency: the learning objective and meaningful understanding (Pemahaman Bermakna). In the learning objective, the students can analyze the generic structure and the language features of the text independently.

In the other learning objectives, the students can arrange narrative text with their language suitable to their department characteristics, and last, the students can present their result in front of the class responsibility. In deciding the learning objectives, the teacher must read the Capaian Pembelajaran. He said, "before making a lesson plan I read the Capaian Pembelajaran first.

By reading it will help me to know what kind learning objective should be achieved by the students in the material. After knowing the learning objective, I decide what kind of strategies should I implement at the class." In the lesson plan, there was a meaningful understanding (Pemahaman Bermakna). At this point, the students can apply the text in real life, especially related to their field. In the job, narrative text can be used with persuasive steps, for example, in handling Covid-19.

Based on the analysis of the lesson plan, the researcher found that the Merdeka curriculum is more focused on English skills than on grammar; the teacher said in the interview that "In the Merdeka curriculum, teachers do not allow to teach grammar separately from the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) which means the students just know about grammar, they do not have duty to master it." He added, "Grammar was taught in the Merdeka curriculum only about 30% and the rest of it, we should focus on the skills."

For this reason, the teacher's lesson plan mostly focuses on the skills. After analyzing the lesson plan, especially the learning steps, the teacher focuses on reading and writing skills. Grammar was only explained at a glance to the students, but he always makes sure that the students understand grammar of the text.

3. The Effect of The Strategies on the Students' Grammar Understanding  
 Applying some instructional strategies in the

class, it affected the students' grammar understanding. Based on the observation of teaching process (it can be seen in appendix B) and an interview with the students (it can be seen in appendix D) the researcher found some interesting points:

a. The students' curiosity

The teacher should provoke the students to make them curious about grammar. According to Sanjaya (2006), teaching involves not only the development of cognitive abilities but also affective and psychomotor skills. Therefore, instructional strategies can incorporate the development of all aspects of a student's personality. A teacher must apply a strategy to make the students curious about grammar.

**Tabel 1**  
**Observation in TKR-4 and TSM-4**

Variable	Sub Variable	Indicators	The Finding
Main Activity	Pre-Activity	<u>Questioning</u>	The teacher did not do questioning to the students in both of classes.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Present the questions to all the pupils</li> <li>- Allow pupils time to consider the appropriate response</li> <li>- Direct students to respond to the questions</li> <li>- The teacher responds patiently to student queries and answers (without being distracted by the questions and answers)</li> <li>- Will not mock the students' incorrect response.</li> </ul>	

**Figure 5.**

Based on the class observation, the teacher lacked involving the students in learning grammar activity. He did not ask some questions related to the material to the students. Such questions could provoke the students' curiosity in learning. On the contrary, he tended to make sample of sentences by his own. Such situation happened in TKR-4 and TSM-4. Because of this, few students felt reluctant or shy to give a question, they did not try to involve in teaching-learning process. Even though, many students considered grammar is vital to learn as it can be seen in the following data:

Table 2

Interview with the students of TKR-4 and TSM-4	
Question	Answer
Do you believe that Grammar is important? Why?	<p><b>Student 1</b> I think the students must learn grammar although it is difficult for us to understand the aspect. When the student knows grammar, he can communicate properly with a native speaker.</p> <p><b>Student 2</b> I don't think so because knowing English vocabulary is more important than grammar. By knowing or remembering English vocabulary, I can still communicate with native speakers.</p> <p><b>Student 3</b> Studying grammar is important because it helps me distinguish between verb and subject or verb1 and verb 2. When I know what verb1 and verb 2 is, I will not make mistakes in communicating with native speaker someday.</p> <p><b>Student 4</b> The students must learn grammar to, someday, meet with a native speaker, so we do not make mistakes in speaking or writing with them.</p>

Figure 6.

Based on the interview, there was a student who had opinion that grammar was not really important. But the rest of them had similar opinion about grammar. They considered that grammar was a very important thing in learning English. Knowing grammar could help them communicate orally or in written way with English speakers without making any mistake.

Besides that, grammar is crucial for them to distinguish between two verb forms that is present verb and past verb. As matter of fact, the students were curious about grammar; unfortunately, the teacher had not given a facilitation to make them more curious in making sentences by themselves. If the teacher could get more involved with the students in using grammar, such as asking them to make sentences by themselves. It could give them

a. chance to practice.

b. The students' understanding

By learning grammar, they can speak or compose some sentences correctly. Grammar actually is not a new thing for them, as they have learned it since in junior high school. Although they haven't mastered grammar thoroughly but at least they know the basic grammar as stated by the students in the interview shown in Figure 7.

Table 3

Interview with the students of TKR-4 and TSM-4

Question	Answer
By learning grammar, do you comprehend grammar?	<p><b>Student 1</b> I pretty much understand grammar, although I haven't mastered it.</p> <p><b>Student 2</b> Although I haven't mastered it, I have a decent grasp of grammar.</p> <p><b>Students 3</b> I know grammar for the basic.</p> <p><b>Student 4</b> Not really, but I can differentiate between subject and verb.</p>

Figure 7.

Most of the students had the similar responses for this question. They understood grammar even though they had not mastered it well. Most of them knew a basic grammar, at least they could differentiate between present verbs and past verbs; they knew which one was subject and verb of a sentence, and the like. To help students understand grammar, the teacher has to give an assignment related to the material.

According to Sanjaya (2006), it is said that requiring the students to do a task can help them recall facts or information about the delivered material. This fact can be shown in Figure 8.

Table 4

Observation in TKR-4 and TSM-4

Variable	Sub Variable	Indicators	The Finding
Main Activity	Whilst-Activity	<p><u>Analyzing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Permit pupils to search for the answer individually or in groups</li> <li>- Assist the students when they require assistance.</li> <li>- Provide correction if students make a mistake</li> </ul>	The teacher did all the point in both of the classes.

Figure 8.

Based on the observation in the main activity, the teacher gave opportunity to the students to analyze the language features of narrative text and they permitted to finish the task in group. In this activity, he did not only sit on his seat, he walked around at the class in order to know which group of students had troubled in analyzing the task.

When he found one, he absolutely helped the group to find the correct answer but if the students made mistake in answering the question, he would guide them until they could answer the correct one. By doing a task, the students admitted that the task could give them some improvement in their understanding of grammar, although they easily forgot it when they tried to make sentences. As it is known that English grammar is basically much different from the students' native language.

It can be supported by their statements in the following table:

**Table 5**  
**Interview with the students of TKR-4 and TSM-4**

Question	Answer
Do the exercises help you to comprehend grammar? Why?	<p><b>Student 1</b>                      The given assignment helps me understand grammar, and although I will forget it again, I can differentiate between simple present and past tense.</p> <p><b>Student 2</b>                      I can comprehend grammar a little bit by doing the assignment. Because I can practice using the tense.</p> <p><b>Student 3</b>                      I understand grammar a little bit by doing the task.</p> <p><b>Student 4</b>                      The task can help the students comprehend grammar, but I still struggle to comprehend it because grammar is very difficult for me.</p>

**Figure 9.**

Most of the students principally had the same point of view in answering the question. It means that the assignment which was given by their teacher could help them in understanding grammar in this case a narrative text although they tended to forget it again in another time. In another way, by doing an assignment could help the students in practicing of using the given grammar by their teacher.

Yet, some of them were still struggling in understanding it but, at least, the students could comprehend the basic principle of grammar concerning subject and verb. It was approved by the teacher's answer in the following question "How fundamental is it for students to comprehend grammar? And he said that "At least, they know about subject, verb1, verb2 and also the simple tense such as simple present tense, simple past tense".

c. The students' score

The researcher conducted a grammar test in order to know how good the students' grammar competence was. There were 40 students of two classes, TKR-4 and TSM-4, who were given the test. The students who pass the test if they get scores of more than 70, it belongs to very good point. Whereas the ones who get 70 categorized as medium, and less than 70 belongs to poor. The score results of each class can be seen in the Figure 10.

**Table 6**  
**The grammar test result of TKR-4**

CATEGORIZE	SCORE	TOTAL OF STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Very good	>70	7	35%
Medium	70	1	5%
Poor	<70	12	60%

**Figure 10.**

From Figure 10, it was shown that the strategies did not help improve the students' scores in TKR-4 because 35% of students got >70, and the students who got 70 were only 5%. There were 60% of students who had <70, which means their knowledge of grammar is poor. It can be concluded that, 40% of TKR-4 students got passing grade point. Whereas 60% of them was poor.

**Table 7**  
**The grammar test result of TSM-4**

CATEGORIZE	SCORE	TOTAL OF STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Very good	>70	3	15%
Medium	70	3	15%
Poor	<70	14	70%

**Figure 11.**

Based on Figure 11 of TSM-4, it was shown that the strategies did not significantly affect the student's scores on a grammar test. There were 15% of students who had scores >70, and the other 15% got 70 scores. The last, 70% of students had scores <70 on a grammar test. It can be concluded that 30% of TSM-4 students got passing grade point and 70% students belong to poor grade.

In both classes, only few students obtained good scores or had good grammar ability and most students obtained the lowest percentage scores. It can be concluded that the teacher's strategies are not able to help the students to improve their grammar competence.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

Based on the theory proposed in the chapter two, the factor who make the teacher should apply strategies in the class because English grammar is very different from Indonesian grammar, and teaching grammar to Indonesian learners are not easy because English considers as foreign language. According to Dehghani et al (2016), there are some aspects of English grammar are tough for EFL learners to master than the other English aspects, whereas were simpler.

It means that, grammar is the most challenging aspects for the students to comprehend it. Hence, the teacher has to implemented one or more strategies in teaching grammar to help the students in understanding grammar. A teacher who applies strategies in the class showed that the teacher has effort to provoke the students' activeness in the teaching-learning activity, so that they can achieve the learning objectives.

In line with Mora (2022) teaching strategy refers to the teachers' action of efforts in achieving the goals. The goal of learning grammar in Merdeka curriculum is to make the students understand and can use it in real life. It is supported by Phoung vi et al (2022), they found that utilizing grammar learning techniques has a major impact on grammar accomplishment because of the significant association between these strategies and students' learning levels.

In this study result, the teacher had applied many strategies in the class, but the strategies did not help the students for being active in the class. Because the teacher did not really involve the students in teaching grammar. When the teacher

tried to make a sentence as an example, he did not try to involve the students in making it. So, the consequence is the students did not pay attention to the teacher's explanation and the learning objective of grammar cannot be fulfilled by the students.

It is opposite with Asyiah (2017), she found that a strategy can give positive effect in teaching learning activity. It means that the teacher's strategies did not give impact so much to the students' comprehension in grammar. The researcher had faced difficulty in conducting research in SMK 2 Muhammadiyah Ajibarang. The difficulty was faced by the researcher in interviewing the students. Most of them did not really comprehend the interview questions.

So, the researcher had to clarify more detail the question aim. Unfortunately, their answers were still vague. It makes the researcher need to guess what the students' answer.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the result on the result and discussion in Chapter IV, it can be concluded that the English teacher in SMK Muhammadiyah 2 Ajibarang has some strategies in teaching grammar in the Merdeka curriculum. He applies four strategies in teaching grammar in the classroom, namely expository learning strategy, cognitive strategy, cooperative learning strategy, and socio-affective strategy.

In the teaching learning process, the teacher is expected to apply the strategies and involve the students' participation. However, the teacher occasionally gives more explanation other than giving some questions to students or asking them to make a question. Such activities can encourage the students' curiosity and creativity in learning.

To stimulate the student's interest, the teacher must provide an environment that encourages active questioning and the pursuit of answers. This implies that he should refrain from delivering monotonous lectures in which he exhaustively explains every detail.

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