

The Urgency of Developing English Language Skills In Children at Early Childhood

Yenda Puspita ^{1*}, Wirda Ningsih ², Semiono Raharjo³

¹ Early Childhood Education, Al-Kifayah Islamic College of Riau

² Islamic Religious Education, Al-Kifayah Islamic College of Riau

³ Physics teacher, SMAN 1 Piyungan, Indonesia

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Abstract:

The introduction of English from an early age is a positive action in order to improve the quality of Indonesian human resources in facing the globalization. The purpose of this study was to determine the importance of developing English skill in early childhood. The research method was descriptive qualitative, the research subjects were 20 children at SAZ Kindergarten Pekanbaru. Research data were obtained through observation sheet, interview guidelines and documentation. Research results on the development of English in early childhood at SAZ Kindergarten Pekanbaru are introduced through methods that can support the learning process. So, it can run well and be fun through singing, playing and question and answer strategies.

*Correspondence Address:

yendapuspita@gmail.com ,

wirdaningsih2007@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

The human development of language is very important, and is taught at an early age so that they are able to pronounce vocabulary into sentences fluently and understood by the interlocutor (Steels, 2011) . Language development is a process that controls the human left brain in language and speaking which is very important for humans (Dehaene-Lambertz et al., 2008) . Language is an important communication tool to make children can communicate fluently (Brenner, 2013) . If someone has difficulties in communication with the language barrier, they will also face difficulty to socialize in society.

As English is a foreign language in Indonesia, it is very important to start teaching the language to children from an early age because it is the main communication tool for global communication (Dolean, 2015) . For early childhood learning aid, many schools use words, fruit, the alphabet, and math for children. Moreover, this can be taught through English words, items depicted in pictures, or even English animated films (Er, 2013) .

English is recognized as an international language, and is used by everyone who travels and interacts with people, It become important for everyone (Dolean, 2015) . Even if they can't communicate in English, they will at least use it, and bring impact how young people interact with others as they grow up.

Formal education for children begins with PAUD (Early Childhood education) can provide stimulation, and the best and most appropriate education for children from an early age (Zaenab et al., 2020) . PAUD helps the stages of child development in all aspects of abilities from an early age. PAUD provides facilities for them in infrastructure, educational game tools and game areas provided by the school to train aspects of child development (Ellizah et al., 2020) . In addition, teachers at school must be able to supervise children when children play because early childhood is very curious and will explore the games available at school (Jones et al., 2002) .

Awareness of the urgency of mastering English in children creates its own challenges and problems for experts and educators to design effective and enjoyable English learning methods for early childhood (Journal et al., 2010) . As a foreign language, English is something new for children, especially a group of children who do not use English in their family environment or who rarely come into contact with English (Ryan & Sales, 2013) . Moreover, English is a foreign language that is not used as the language of everyday conversation in Indonesia. It makes parents, especially teachers, assume that it will be very difficult for children to participate in learning English, so that learning is far from expectations. It happens because educators positioning themselves as English learners so that the learning techniques, methods and strategies used reflect how the teacher has done it.

Teachers play a very important role in a child's education (Phajane, 2014) . Teachers generally refer to professional educators with the main task of educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students (Bers et al., 2002) . The teacher is also defined as 1) someone who has charisma or authority that needs to be imitated and emulated; 2) adults who are consciously responsible for educating, teaching and guiding children; 3) people who have the ability to design learning programs and are able to organize and manage classes; and (4) a position or profession that requires special expertise.

Teachers also need to choose learning strategies that will look attractive and easy when children receive teaching materials from children in class (Stipek & Byler, 2019) .

Creative teachers will have an impact on the course of learning and provide stimulation to children by teaching English at early childhood in the classroom, and assisted with media and educational game tools to support teaching English (Shalihah et al., 2021). As for ways to optimize children's language skills in the right way or it will not have an optimal impact on children learning by absorbing knowledge from the teacher, and the teacher will affect children's ability to understand or understand (Nunan et al., 2015).

In introducing English learning the teacher will ask the child to imitate the teacher in mentioning the vocabulary first, after that the teacher repeats mentioning the basic vocabulary and asks child For imitating it until child really understand, after that the child is asked to repeat again to mention the basic vocabulary. After that the teacher shows a picture of an object using concrete learning media so that the child is able to recall the learning that has been given by the previous teacher, so that the child can improve his English skills well. Then the teacher invites the children to sing a song in Language english as well as teachers invite children to play games with objective For expand English language skill for children in a fun way.

THEORITICAL REVIEW

The position of English in Indonesia is the first foreign language. This position is different from the second language. (Gilmore & Cuskelly, 2009) in this case states that the second language is the language that children learn after their mother tongue with the characteristics of the language used in the surrounding community. Meanwhile, foreign languages are languages of other countries that are not generally used in social interactions. The position of English in Indonesia has resulted in the rare use of English in social interactions in the community so that English is a difficult language to learn because English is a foreign language that is not used in everyday life in Indonesian society (Setiyadi, 2020).

Learning English in early childhood certainly cannot be equated with teenage or adult students (Sumarni et al., 2022). In early childhood, teaching English is only limited to introduction, especially focusing on vocabulary building and not exploring the use of complex grammar. So learning English for young children is only limited to the basics and in a fun way because they are in the learning phase while playing (Sartika et al., 2021).

English functions as a tool for communication in order to access information, as well as a tool for fostering interpersonal relationships and exchanging information (Saputra

et al., 2020) . The ability to communicate in English, both in spoken and written form which includes listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

Learning English for early childhood should give a pleasant impression and stimulate language and children's experiences (Sari, 2019) . Thus, activities should be designed as simple as possible so that children can understand what the teacher expects them to do. Activities for young children must also be according to their abilities, namely not too easy but not too difficult, the point is to focus more on verbal activities and involve physical movement

METHOD

This research was carried out by using a qualitative approach with descriptive analysis methods, which aims to identify and describe the urgency of developing English skills for children at an early age. The population is the 20 children at SAZ Kindergarten Pekanbaru. The data collection technique is interview. According to Afrizal (2015) interviews are a data collection method that requires direct communication between the researcher and the subject or respondent. The data obtained is analyzed using thematic approach, data analysis techniques that emphasize the preparation of coding with reference to predetermined research questions, so that the themes are arranged in accordance with the research questions and become a reference in explaining the phenomena that occur.

DISCUSSION AND DISCUSSION

The Importance of English Education in Early Childhood

English cannot be underestimated nowadays. This is due to the importance of English. More parents want to teach their children to learn English from an early age. It is indeed to teach young children, not only English, but other things. Teaching English to early childhood has a very different way when compared to teenagers or adults. In early childhood, teaching English is only an introduction stage. So, early childhood can only be taught the basics and they are taught by playing, but not just playing. Playing here is directed play. In this way they can find out many things. We need to know that when a child is playing, the state of the child's brain is calm because he feels happy and cheerful. With conditions like this the knowledge we teach can enter and be embedded properly and easily in their brains.

Children are able to develop English language skills through learning strategies by introducing vocabulary according to themes, for example objects, animals, plants and food using English. The teacher's task is to help students to be able to understand the teaching materials that have been delivered by the teacher, but giving explanations to early childhood must be easy to understand in terms of delivery, and use language that is not long-winded so that children are able to understand this learning (Abida Ferindistika Putri et al., 2019) . Teachers must be able to give attention to children such as motivation in learning such as children who have difficulty learning but teachers are willing to help but by giving enthusiasm to children (Gilmore & Cuskelly, 2009) Encouraging children from an early age is very good to be applied from an early age because children will feel someone pays attention to him so that the child will return to his enthusiasm for learning. It is very important to get moral support from parents, especially support from parents because children really need encouragement from those closest to them, and feel loved by those closest to them. In addition, the child will become a warm person because he grows from a family, and a warm environment also provides encouragement in the form of enthusiasm and motivation which is very meaningful for the child's life.

Teachers have a very important role for children to provide education, and hone children's abilities in all aspects of child development (Hashemi & Azizinezhad, 2011) . The activities of children in the classroom and the school environment are under the supervision of the teacher, therefore school facilities and infrastructure must be friendly for early childhood, which means that they are not harmful to children, both physically and in the form of food intake. Teaching and learning activities in the classroom can be arranged in advance by the teacher in RPPH, as well as suitable media given to children in a learning theme. In addition, teachers must be able to create a fun learning atmosphere for children in the classroom, and teachers are able to provide active, creative and innovative learning in stimulating all aspects of children's development including children's abilities in English. To provide stimulation for learning English for young children, it needs to be given regularly, and according to the portion for early childhood.

The teacher's active role is needed in this regard, in other words teachers are also required to know a little about English so they can buy books on the basis of English and teach it to their children at school. The several reasons why children should be required to master English from an early age are;

1. Geographical factors are the first reason why Indonesians need to learn English. Indonesia is surrounded by countries where most of the population speaks English as a first or second language. These countries include Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Australia, and so on. Learning English will make it easier for someone to communicate with other people when one day they go abroad.
2. English needs to be studied because of its widespread use as a language of international communication. In order to be able to communicate with people of different cultural and national backgrounds, English is the main choice that is often used in communication. An easy-to-see example is in the world of tourism. Tourists who travel abroad usually use English to be able to communicate with local residents. In addition, English is also the official language of instruction in the world of transportation both in the air and at sea.
3. Most of the information contained in the world also uses English as the language of publication. We can take an example from the internet, most of the information provider sites on the internet are in English. Not only on the internet, there are also many books that use English. Fluently speaking English will greatly assist children in exploring and accessing sources of knowledge both from written and electronic media.

Methods of Learning English for Early Childhood

Many factors accompany children's language development, both internal and external to the child, including health, intelligence, family conditions, family relationships. Healthy children learn to speak faster than unhealthy children, because their motivation is stronger to speak. become a member of a social group and communicate with members of that group. If at the age of the first two years, the child experiences continuous pain, then the child tends to experience delays or difficulties in language development. Children with high intelligence learn to speak more quickly and show superior mastery of language than children with low intelligence. For this reason, in introducing English to children, one must pay attention to the level of intelligence of the child. Children who have a high level of intelligence, especially language intelligence, will more easily absorb the language they are introduced to, they will master vocabulary more, easily imitate and even use it in everyday conversations. A child like this will have language reflexes in communicating,

he will say, Thank you if we give something to him. The method used by researchers to develop English language skills is as follows:

Teacher's Voice

The interaction between teachers and students is a very important component in supporting the success of a learning process. This interaction indicates a communicative situation between the teacher and students using a certain language to achieve learning objectives. The choice of language is a crucial factor in this interaction because the two-way delivery of information between the teacher and students is determined by the language chosen. In the context of learning English as a foreign language in Indonesia, the use of both English and Indonesian as the language of instruction must take into account the needs, conditions and characteristics of students. Likewise, if under certain conditions, the teacher uses the mother tongue as the medium of instruction in learning English as in this study.

The use of English as the language of instruction is highly recommended, especially in the context of considering that children generally only get exposure to English in English learning classes. Therefore, the main source of English input for children is when the teacher speaks, sings, tells stories, dialogues in dramatization, gives instructions, controls/disciplines the class, provides feedback, praises, seeks information, gives examples of using English, checks understanding. children, joking around, and to keep things fun.

The use of teacher's voice in English will improve the English that children receive. Continued exposure will help introduce the concept of multilingualism to children from an early age in a very natural way and this can have a positive impact on their language learning in the future.

Based on the discussion above, teacher voice and student voice in a lesson have a vital role in creating effective two-way interaction and communication in the learning process. The use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction in learning English must be based on considerations based on existing classroom conditions.

Sing and listen to songs

Listening to music has several benefits, one of which can improve our brain function when connected to learning English. Through the singing method, it is hoped that it will be able to attract children's interest in carrying out English learning activities, especially vocabulary mastery, in a fun and carefree manner. By making children like the learning methods used, it is hoped that the learning process will run well so that children do not feel bored, bored and find it difficult to master vocabulary. When a child is interested in learning using the singing method, it will be easy for the child to follow each stage of learning, so it will be easy for the child to master and memorize English vocabulary. Prayudha et al., (2021) said that the singing method is a learning approach that is actually able to make children happy and happy, which is directed at a psychological condition to build a happy soul, enjoy enjoying beauty, develop a sense through singing, namely the expression of words and tones that are strung together to become a song, as well as rhythmic that beautifies the learning atmosphere.

According to Gilligan (2020) songs that are good for Kindergarten-aged children are songs that pay attention to the following criteria: The verses or sentences are not too long, easy for children to memorize, there is an educational mission, according to the character and world of the child, the tone taught is easy controlled by children.

Singing and music are used as techniques in the process of learning English. Music which contains various elements in it can be used as a form of facility to develop children's cognitive abilities. High pitch provides an opportunity for children to practice their hearing sensitivity. Changes in rhythm or musical rhythm train children to distinguish internal rhythms (inner rhythm) and their motor abilities (for example, when combined with movement exercises according to the lyrics).

Singing can provide satisfaction, joy, and happiness for children so that it can encourage children to study harder (Joyful Learning). With singing a child will more quickly learn, master, and practice a teaching material delivered by educators. Besides that ability children in listening (listening), singing (singing), creativity (creative) can trained through this activity.

Play Games

One of the children's world is play, therefore the teacher needs to know the child's world is play so as to provide learning or stimulation mixed in playing so that children will be comfortable learning, and developing English for children from an early age (Anderson,

2010) . Teachers also have to know the right strategies for early childhood in the teaching and learning process in various innovative ways.

Teaching English to young children should be done as fun as possible, one of which is to make them play while learning. Playing games in the target language is a proven technique that can build children's language skills while also giving them the opportunity to have fun

Can be given using educational game tools that will be meaningful for the development of children from an early age. Apart from that, the main thing is to create a sense of courage to appear in front of the class for children from an early age so that children will be able to say vocabulary in English in front of the class because it is very important that children's self-confidence is grown from an early age so that children will dare to appear in front of friends. -classmates, and will have other positive values for the child until the child grows up.

There are many interactive games that can be applied in English learning activities, one of which is known as Simon Says. This game can be said to be one of the games that applies the TPR (Total Physical Response) method because in its implementation it involves physical activity and movement. Through these games, children are invited to be active in listening games while understanding English instructions. So the children focused on carrying out whatever instructions were said by the main character in the game, namely Simon. For example when the teacher said Simon says, "Stand Up", all the children stood up simultaneously as instructed by Simon.

Based on the results of the research above, it is obtained data if developing English in children in Kindergarten Saz Pekanbaru with how to accustom children to mention vocabulary nouns or around _ school so that children will get used to it, but the teacher must first apply habituation to students. In providing an introduction to English to teacher students in Kindergarten Saz have learning strategies that are used in the teaching and learning process such as providing media pictures of objects and food in English, using singing videos in English, pronouncing vocabulary using English, being able to sing in English with children during the teaching and learning process in class, and playing games using English and asking questions so that learning will stick in the brain of early childhood. Because the brain of early childhood is very good if it is given the right stimulation using the method, and gradually does not force the child's will or continuously. Appropriately learning for students should be gradual, routine and habituation to children

of school age and in class. The teacher provides learning, and stimulates English to students in accordance with school policies and the learning theme which is different every week.

Supported by the results of interviews with school principals who stated that implementing English-based learning strategies for early childhood is very appropriate given the *golden age* that only comes once in a lifetime, and the school will be dedicated to providing the best for students in Kindergarten Saz Pekanbaru. Learning is also carried out in fun learning which will provide a different atmosphere so that children do not feel pressured by being given teaching materials by the teacher, and the teacher applies happy playing and educating learning to play which is fun for children so that children will feel happy in participating in learning by each teacher. *Happy playing and educating* is a learning process that applies fun playing while learning. Like singing in English about the names of animals, plants and so on.

In addition, before the teacher gives teaching materials to students in the classroom, discussions or questions and answers are held with other teachers along with the principal to discuss what learning strategies are right for children so that the stimulation given in English is optimal for students. The teacher provides learning that can help children's vocabulary in Indonesian which is not yet perfect, and learn per vocabulary in English so that later children will be able to communicate even though they are still stuttering but it is natural like that because to introduce English to children from an early age is already good but to communicate with lancer takes time, and the process is quite long. The teacher must also provide regular stimulation to students during the teaching and learning process so that children will get used to it because it has become a habit for the teacher to carry out the learning process in class every day by providing learning media as well so that it will make it easier for children to digest the knowledge from the teacher.

CONCLUSION

Teacher's strategy in stimulating and developing English in students at Kindergarten Saz Pekanbaru. has increased because the teacher has the right way so that children are able to know English. Children are able to develop English language skills. Learning strategies by introducing per vocabulary according to the theme, for example through singing, playing and asking questions with objects, animals, plants and food using English. The introduction of learning is very important to be applied by the teacher routinely but not to impose or burden the abilities of children who must be able to because the abilities

of children with other children are different, this is where the teacher's role is very important and primary in providing teaching, and stimulation in developing English for early childhood .

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