

A Portray of Teaching English for Young Learners in Manado City: The Teacher's Media, Method, and Challenges

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Abstract

This study aimed at describing the teaching of English to the kindergarten students in Manado City which contributed to the improvement of English Teaching and Learning quality for young learners. This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design with 14 teachers who taught English in 5 kindergartens as participants. The data was collected through interview to the participants and documentation of English learning materials and media. Then, the data was analyzed by applying three techniques; data reduction, data display, and data verification. The results revealed that the teachers who taught English designed the learning materials such as the alphabet, numbers, colors, animals, and days. In terms of teaching and learning media, seven teachers (50%) used the textbooks provided by the school. Two teachers (14%) used flashcards to help them convey the teaching material. Three teachers (22%) used pictures and two teachers (14%) used songs. The researchers found that 36% of the teachers used story telling method, 22% used singing, 21% made small groups, 14% conducted repetition, and only 7% applied the Role Play method. Moreover, findings on the challenges faced by the teachers in teaching English showed that the students' difficulty in pronouncing English words, inadequate time to teach English, and the teacher's non-English academic background became the factors influencing the teaching and learning process in Manado City Kindergartens.

Keywords: Teaching English, Young Learners, Media, Method, Challenges

Introduction

Learning a foreign language in the era of globalization is important. English is one of the international languages that is widely used to communicate between countries; thus, it is important to introduce it from an early age. Pinter (Suhendan, 2013) explains that children younger than 11-12 years of age, with favorable circumstances, have a high probability of being more fluent in acquiring a foreign language, even like native speakers without an accent. Vocabulary is the main component that must be taught in learning English. Richards and Renandya (Rahmadhani, 2015) explained that vocabulary is the basis for determining a person's proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Wells (Kurnia, 2017) explains that children learn language from other people's words and imitate the intonation or accent around them. Learning English makes children automatically have to know the meaning of a word in their own way and be able to use it in sentences.

(Purwaningsih et al., 2017) explained that teaching foreign language vocabulary to children cannot be done by providing a collection of various vocabulary to memorize because children will only feel forced to memorize everything. Children cannot be taught English independently, this will make them feel confused and maybe frustrated. Moreover, teaching English to children is far different from teenagers or adults. Teachers need to know the right way to teach English to children. Nation (Wulanjani, 2016) explains that teachers must provide facilities for learning English vocabulary by teaching useful words and helping children to understand their meaning in their way.

Teachers need to provide learning in an interesting way to make children enjoy the teaching and learning process. Activities that can be done are to make a vocabulary list that children need, taken from things that are close to them, such as body parts, family members, animal names, fruit names, and so forth. In addition, the teacher should employ appropriate methods. Oemar Hamalik (Fanani, 2014) argues that the method is the method used to convey something learning materials to achieve curriculum goals. Children are individuals who like fun and playing activities, therefore teachers need to have teaching methods that are by children's characteristics.

Up to now, in Indonesia, teachers have conducted lessons to improve children's English vocabulary skills using singing, imitating/drilling, and game methods. The singing method is considered effective in making children quickly understand and memorize so that children can more quickly grasp the vocabulary material being taught. The imitating/drilling method is used to see the child's pronunciation of the vocabulary being taught. Children can understand and know the vocabulary they are learning because they are repeated until they understand. The game method is used to avoid child boredom when using the same method.

The use of the game method is carried out so that children become interested in the learning being carried out. Games are a fun method of teaching vocabulary to children. Huyen & Nga's (Wulanjani, 2016) mentioned the effectiveness of games, namely that children seem to learn faster and it is easier to maintain learning material in a stress-free and comfortable environment.

As for the results of research using the spelling game method in learning English, a research conducted by (Adi, S.S. & Wijaya, 2018) regarding teaching English vocabulary using spelling game to kindergarten children with a total of 11 out of 28 respondents showed that the results of most children were grouped in the very good category.

Another method that can be used to teach English to Young learners is storytelling method. It is one of the traditional methods but also one of the modern tools of learning that not only helps to teach language or provides a fun time, but also guides and helps children to develop psychological and physical well-being to become individuals who are acceptable in the social environment they live in. (Isik, 2016) explained that storytelling activities help teachers to teach new vocabulary, revise new words, structure sentences, memorize new phrases, familiarize themselves with new contexts, etc. When listening to stories, children also learn how to follow the rhythm, stress, and punctuation of a second language.

Studies research on using the storytelling method in improving children's English skills revealed interesting results. (Arinoviani, K.D., Pudjawan, K., & Antara, 2016) researched the application of the storytelling method to improve the English of children in extracurricular activities. Researchers provide solutions to overcome obstacles to teaching English using the storytelling method. The storytelling method provides progress in children's language skills by increasing the average percentage of learning outcomes from cycle I to cycle II. Visible progress is that the child can pronounce and imitate the characters using English, the child can answer the child's questions about the story, and the characters in the story by showing pictures, and the child can name the characters using English. Children spell each word and say it repeatedly. The storytelling method can train children's comprehension, train children's thinking, and concentration.

The issue of Teaching English for Young Learners has been explored and revealed various findings. (Arumsari et al., 2017) explored the teaching English to young learners in 28 kindergartens in Sukokilo subdistrict. By doing interview, they found that the methods used by the teachers were storytelling, singing, and role-play. Another research by (Fatihaturasyidah & Septiana, 2019) which described the teaching and learning process in Visi Intan Cendekia Kindergarten revealed that the provision of English for TK Visi Insan Cendekia Kindergarten students is carried out by inserting English utterances/ expressions or

vocabulary in the learning and interaction processes in school associated with learning themes. This is in line with a study by (Herdyastika & Kuriawan, 2021) at 2 kindergartens in Salatiga which found that communicative language teaching focused on the students' interaction offered better result than Grammar Translation because it made the students repeat regularly the language and help in memorizing vocabulary through an intensive practice. Moreover, (Ulya & Hasanah, 2020) investigated the strategy employed by the teachers in introducing English to the students in Santa Maria Kindergarten, Banjarmasin. The results showed English teaching in TK Santa Maria Banjarmasin that appropriate in the learning process was in accordance with the child's development, English development strategies that are equipped: 1) Learning methods used such as singing, game, listen and repeat, questions and answer and make matches. 2) The media used are display media and worksheets. 3) The materials are family, animals, healthy food and Christmas. 4) The assessment used are observation, children product, conversation and anecdotes. All the studies suggested the teaching and learning English to young learners must be carried out using innovative, communicative, and interesting methods to get the students focus and attention. It should suit to the children needs, characterization, and physical and mental development.

Furthermore, the teaching English to Young learner has own characteristics and sometimes faced problems to deal with in terms of teacher's competency, learners' readiness, and curriculum. (Sudrajat, 2015) explored the English teachers' competency in selecting, developing, designing, using, and evaluating teaching and learning process. This study revealed that the implementation of English teaching at elementary schools in Tenggara was poor. Similarly, teachers' competency in selecting, developing, and designing material, in doing teaching and learning process, in using media and learning sources, and in evaluating and making test was also low or weak. Another study on the problems in TEYL was conducted by (Daulay & Pransiska, 2022). This study concluded that the problems of kindergarten teachers in the introduction of English to early childhood in the Batang Angkola sub-district, Tapanuli Selatan district, are still experiencing obstacles and problems. The problems experienced by teachers is the use of evaluation, namely the teacher there has not implemented any assessment technique to evaluate the teaching and learning process.

In Indonesia, English lessons are given at least once a week to children. Children can understand the meaning of vocabulary, but it takes a little time to make children understand. Constraints that are often experienced by teachers are that children have difficulty pronouncing the vocabulary they have learned, children are busy with their activities such as chatting rather than paying attention to the teacher, and children's responses are a little

difficult because children are more accustomed to using traditional Language in everyday learning. There are no specific indicators to assess children's English language development. Furthermore, teachers who teach English do not have any academic background in English. As Suyanto (in Pransiska, 2016) argued that in Indonesia, EYL teachers are classified into three types, namely: 1) classroom teachers who have not been to an English teaching college, 2) English teachers who attend English teaching college but have no experience working with children, and 3) teachers who have English background and experience working with children. Therefore, this phenomenon influences the effectiveness of English teaching and learning.

Unlike the previous studies that tended to discuss the media, the strategy, and the problems of TEYL in one single different research. The present study aimed at exploring three issues simultaneously at 5 kindergartens in Manado City using interview and documentation data collection technique. The results of this study are beneficial for the development of Government's and school's policy towards the quality of TEYL in Indonesia generally and in Manado City particularly.

Methodology

The location of this research was in five kindergartens in Manado City, with the following details: AS Kindergarten, IC Kindergarten, AM Kindergarten, AT Kindergarten, and NH Kindergarten. The total respondents were fourteen teachers who taught English vocabulary to children. The sources of data in this research were transcripts of interviews with teachers, document archives in the form of lesson plans and curriculum, photographs, and sound recordings.

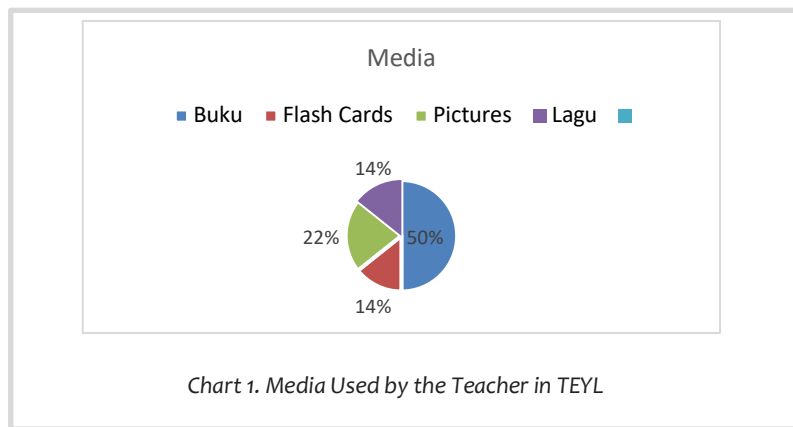
This research used a qualitative descriptive approach. It takes the phenomenon regarding English language learning by teachers to children in five Kindergartens in Manado City. The data was collected by using one to one semi-structured interview and documentation. Before conducting the interview, the researcher prepared an interview guide consisting six questions related to TEYL process and the challenges faced by the teachers. Documentation was carried out to see the supporting aspects used in learning such as teaching and learning media, and lesson plans.

Moreover, the data were analyzed by employing data reduction, data display, and data verification. Data verification was carried out to ensure that there was no missing information in the results of the interviews as well as several existing documents before they were grouped for analysis. After analysis and verification, researchers concluded from the final results of data management.

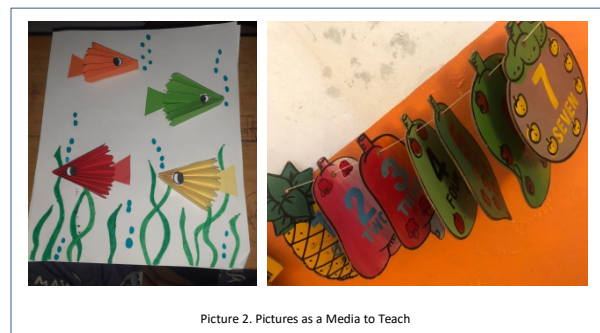
Findings

a. Media Used in the Teaching English for Young Learners

Based on the results of interviews with fourteen teachers who teach English at five kindergarten institutions in Manado, it was found that seven teachers (50%) used the textbooks provided by the school. Two teachers (14%) used flashcards to help them convey the teaching material. Three teachers (22%) used pictures and two teachers (14%) used songs.

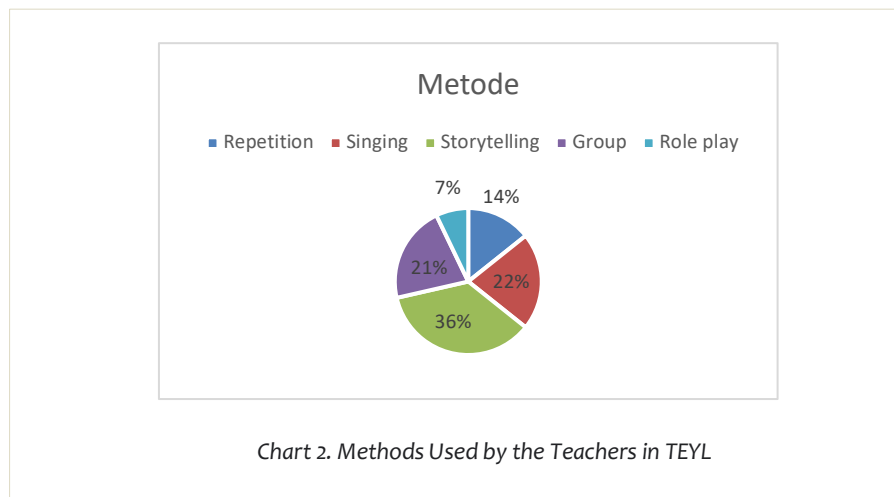


Meanwhile, from the results of the documentation, the researcher obtained information that the textbooks used are written by Condrywati, et al with the title "Smart in Playgroups", a book for children aged 3 to 4 years. Some teachers use a book compiled by Intan Pratiwi with the title "Skillful and Proficient in English and Picture Coloring". Mariati Aprilia Harahap's book entitled "Easy and Fun, English for Kids" is also the teacher's choice as a medium for learning English for kindergarten students. For picture media, the teacher is creative in making pictures of colored paper formed into colorful fish as a tool for materials on animals and colors.



Some teachers used cardboard to form fruit shapes, and colors, and have numbers so that they can be used when explaining Fruits, Colors, and Numbers material. Meanwhile, the song media used by the teacher to help the learning process are songs related to learning themes such as the alphabet, numbers, animals, and days song.

b. Methods Used in the Teaching English for Young Learners



The researchers found that 36% of the teachers used story telling method, 22% used singing, 21% made small groups, 14% conducted repetition, and only 7% applied Role Play method in teaching English to their students. This data showed that Story telling became the most favorite teacher's method.

Storytelling is the method most liked by children. By telling stories, children can think sequentially about an event and sharpen their critical thinking about the problems in the story. Storytelling can also be implemented with pictures and puppets to represent the characters in the story so that learning becomes more optimal and fun for children. In this study, the story that usually given to the students should integrate the moral values such as the story of *Frog and the Turtle*, *The Lion and the Mouse*, *Three Fishes*, and so forth. The teachers searched for the stories from internet, you tube video, and story books available in the bookstores.

Another method that mostly used by the teachers was songs. It can be used in many different ways: to warm up the situation in the beginning of the lesson, to make transition from one activity to the next, to change mood, to get everyone's attention, or to integrate with games. Music helps children develop their language skills. By singing song, children learn language appreciation, vocabulary and rhyme. The teacher will ask the children to sing a song

while moving; the movement must match songs such as *Finger Song, Head, Shoulder, Knees and Toes, Alphabet, Days, and also Good Morning Song.*

Children like to work with songs. It is a change from normal activities and can involve them in a subject most young people are interested in. Songs contain a lot of useful language and can be used to highlight grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. Not only at the beginning of the meeting but also at the end the meeting, the teaching will end up by singing a song. In singing activity, there are two integrated skills which are listening skills and speaking skills. First of all, the students have to make a circle. Speaking skills showed by the team gave an example by singing and dancing about the song around once or twice. And then, after the students watched and listened the team, they had to follow the song that they heard before. The students should imitate the dance and the rhythm of the team.

c. Teachers' Challenges in Teaching English for Young Learners

The obstacles found in the teaching of English at kindergarten in Manado City, namely difficulties in pronouncing the newly learned vocabulary. For example, the R1 said that the students' pronunciation was not clear and they were not confident because English spelling is different from its pronunciation. R2 argued that the students' lack of self-confidence made them difficult to memorize the English vocabulary. R6 stated that they do not have any idea of English so they were difficult to understand the material. In addition, R8 elucidated that the students' pronunciation became the most problematic thing because they haven't accustomed to English. They tended to speak the Manadonese language. Lastly, R12 and R13 agree that the students still cannot read well in Bahasa Indonesia, so they also found difficulties to read English words. Also, their parents did not support the students to learn English at home.

Another challenge faced by the teachers was that the children were busy with their activities such as chatting rather than paying attention to the teacher, less motivated, and less of interested in learning English. For instance, R3 argued that some children do not want to learn English. R4 said that several students do not want to listen to the stories because they felt bored and do not focus on the lesson. Also, R11 agreed that the students have lack of interest in English

The students' preference for using English became a challenge as well. The child responds difficultly because the child is more accustomed to using Manadonese in everyday learning rather than English. The teachers also did not get sufficient learning sources from school, and did not have adequate time to teach English. In addition, the teachers' academic background influences the effectiveness of teaching English in Kindergarten. As R5 responded that we do not have enough time and sufficient teaching materials. It was

supported by R7 who add additional reasons that we are having difficulty in learning the accent of English because we do not have any English background.

Discussion

Vocabulary learned by the students in the fourteen kindergartens in Manado city includes the vocabulary of Alphabet, colors, numbers, and animal. If it is based on Tarigan's theory (Marlianingsih, 2016), the material taught by the teacher is in line with the discussion adjusted to the age level of the child with a different vocabulary. The basic vocabulary that children learn is kinship terms, names of body parts, pronouns, numbers, verbs, nouns, and adjectives. Based on Wilona's opinion (Wilona, 2018), children are more sensitive to something that can be touched and sensed. They respond easily to physical objects that they can touch, see, listen, smell, and even taste. In other words, they acquire language through their surroundings.

In teaching English vocabulary to the students, the teachers used various colorful media that can attract the students' attention such as flashcards, pictures, colorful books, and songs. It related to Suyanto (in Pransiska, 2016) who elucidated that teachers should employ many kinds of media in teaching English to young learners such as pictures, flashcards, realia, and video. These media will keep the learners focused and help the teachers to create effective and interesting learning. Thus, they make the students understand the material easily. Moreover, using song as a media is considered a good strategy because according to (Wilona, 2018), language should be first presented through sounds, not written symbols. Listening and speaking are worked on as the learners produce meaningful utterances concerning physical objects. Songs can be used at the beginning of the lesson, to make a transition from one activity to the next, to change the mood, to get everyone's attention, or to integrate with games. Music helps children develop their language skills. Thus, for this reason, the teachers chose to use singing a song as favorite teaching method.

Another method that the teachers mostly implemented was story telling. They tended to read fables, short stories, and fairy tales with simple and short sentences. Story telling is an appropriate and effective way in enhancing young learners' skills and interest in English and improving their learning output. Through stories, the language adeptness is activated and it is easy for children to bring the language elements provided by the stories. This activity will increase their vocabulary and also improve their pronunciation.

The teachers' effort in creating meaningful learning is also related to their challenges in teaching. In Manado City, there were at least four major factors influencing the process of

teaching and learning English for young learners. First was the students' ability in pronouncing English words. They found it difficult to pronounce the words because they were not accustomed to the use of English in daily communication. The lack of natural exposures to the English environment reduced the students' motivation and confidence in learning English. It supported the findings from (Garton et al., 2011) which discussed that the issue frequently reported as a trigger was a lack of motivation and interest in English on the part of learners. The second was the distraction of Manadonese language as the student's first language. Moreover, the schools' policy and teacher's competence contributed to the quality of teaching English. English was taught only one day a week with 60 minutes time allotment was not enough. Before giving the material, the teachers spent much time managing the class, to make sure that all the students were ready to learn. As a result, the teachers run out the time for the core learning activity. It is in line with Khulel's findings ((Khulel, 2021) that revealed several of hours spent studying English per week were insufficient and the teachers were unable to cover all the information on the syllabus.

Furthermore, the last interesting finding came from the teacher's competence. All the participants in this study did not have any academic background as an English teacher. They are all graduated from the early childhood education department and have not been involved in teaching English activities before. It affected much on their English speaking ability and the quality of their teaching. This finding related (Bland, 2019) and Khulel's statements (Khulel, 2021) that argued the problems in teaching English to Young learners were the teacher's low proficiency in English, the teacher's lack of English language qualifications, and the teacher was not trained as an English teacher.

Conclusion

Learning English in early childhood has been implemented by kindergarten teachers in Manado City. The English learning methods were mostly used were two different methods, namely singing, and storytelling. The singing method is considered to make children understand and memorize the vocabulary taught with ease and make children enthusiastic about learning. Another method was storytelling. It is an appropriate and effective way in enhancing young learners' skills and interest in English and improving their learning output. Through stories, the language adeptness is activated and it is easy for children to bring the language elements provided by the stories. This activity will increase their vocabulary and also improve their pronunciation.

Regarding the challenges in teaching English to the students in kindergarten, there are still concerns that must take into account because of the obstacles experienced in terms of the students having difficulty pronouncing the vocabulary, their business with their activities such as chatting instead of paying attention to the teacher, and the students response to English is a little difficult because the child is more accustomed to using Manadonese language. Moreover, the school's policy to administer teachers with English academic backgrounds was crucial to improving the quality of English teaching and learning. The non-English teacher who taught English at kindergarten should be trained in English skill development and the pedagogical in teaching it. Also, teachers must be equipped with the ability to adapt to the development of technology. Teachers in this era should not only be equipped with pedagogical knowledge but also be equipped with some skills regarding the use of advanced technology. Therefore, the next researchers are expected to be able to expand and increase the number of research subjects so that they can explore many other studies related to English learning methods in early childhood.

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