

UTILIZING VARIOUS MEDIA IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO YOUNG LEARNERS: IS IT MEANINGFUL?

¹ Sri Wahyuningsih, ²Elvira Sho'idatut Taqiyah

e-mail: 1wahyuningsih@iainkudus.ac.id, [2 Shoidatut@gmail.com](mailto:2Shoidatut@gmail.com)

Affiliation ¹ Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kudus, ² Institut Agama Islam Negeri
Kudus

ABSTRACT

Recently, English has been used as a language of communication. This demand makes parents compete to send their children to schools that use English as the medium of language in learning. Learning English as a foreign language in Indonesia has also begun to reach the primary school level. The present study elaborates on the importance of utilizing interesting media to teach English to young learners. A descriptive qualitative method was adopted in this study. Data were collected through interviews with two teachers at Indonesian elementary schools. The findings reveal that in learning English, appropriate learning methods and interesting media are needed to increase students' interest and desire to use English in fun and interesting learning activities for students, both spoken and written fluently and in accordance with their social context.

Keywords: *English, Primary School, Teaching Media, Young Learners*

INTRODUCTION

English was a Germanic language first spoken in England in the Early Middle Ages and is currently the most commonly spoken language worldwide. The widespread use of English is also due to the widespread culture and technology of the United States that dominated throughout the 20th century. Recently, students in the Indonesian context have been learning English since they were in primary school. The adoption of English as a common language over the world has altered many people's viewpoints and encouraged them to learn it, if only for communication.

English for primary school learners is clearly specified in the Indonesian curriculum through condensed content that teaches the four important abilities to speak, listen, read, and write. Although there was a short time available, teaching English in primary

school is very beneficial for young learners (Wahyuningsih & Novita, 2021). It is brought by the fundamental concepts they learned in primary school. In this matter, the learners' vocabulary is frequently introduced. The school's policies will determine whether or not lower-level students take English as a course.

English instruction in primary schools is essential for a variety of reasons. First, it is widely utilized as a language that is inclusive of all elements of life. Second, because primary school students are still young learners, this is the best moment for them to study English as a foreign language. The students will then discover that taking English as their main subject in the next school levels is easier. For this reason, teachers should know which media that can be used and easily accepted by the students in learning English. The role of teachers is to organize any kind of media that can be used to organize students for activities such as watching English videos or listening to English music.

The media will contribute to the education of children by promoting programs in which social norms and traditions are emphasized. The media is an effective resource that employs a variety of methods enhanced by technology to address various faculties of individuals (Suggate & Martzog, 2021). The media has evolved into a powerful force in shaping social value systems. Because global media creators are too powerful to be forced to change their production policies, the solution to protecting children from alienating media programs rests with the government, schools, and parents (Maslahah, 2021; Payant, 2014; Pinkleton et al., 2008). Introducing media technologies to children early does not have any benefits, on the contrary, may be harmful to children's development. The purpose of this study is to describe the teachers' perception of the utilization of interesting media in teaching English to young learners.

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative method was used in this study, and data samples were collected by interviewing two elementary school teachers in Central Java, Indonesia as the main informants. The two participants were chosen on the basis of their willingness to participate. They had given permission and were eager to participate in this study. The participants were gathered on December 26, 2022. The two participants are teachers at different primary schools in Kecapi Tahunan Jepara (Teacher 1 and Teacher 2). To

ensure anonymity, the names of the participants are used as aliases in this paper. During in the interviews, the researchers assure the personal privacy of the participants' identities by annotating all names. The interviews were then transcribed in order to reduce and code the information. Then, the results of the interviews were analysed using a number of stages in data analyses.

DISCUSSION

1. The importance of teaching English using interesting media to young learners

Based on the information inferred from the interviews with the two participants, it is possible to conclude that English is a crucial subject for children to learn. In short, the following elaborations describe some points related to teachers' views regarding using interesting media in teaching English to young learners for a number of reasons.

a. English is used in any aspect of life to increase opportunity

In this age of globalization, the importance of the English language in all aspects of life cannot be exaggerated. In today's world, the English language plays an important role in people's lives. English is essential in all aspects of life in a developing country like Indonesia, especially for students. As students, they learn English in order to gain various knowledge and skills, as well as to perceive and understand anything they learn in English. Learning English for children since primary school is used not only to support and facilitate learning English for higher levels of education but also to familiarize and introduce children to the importance of English in science and technology today (Wahyuningsih & Novita, 2021). As pointed out in the following excerpts:

Teacher 1:

"You can say it is important as long as you never forget your own language because in today's era, a lot of things in everyday life, especially in technology, use English a lot. Of course also for English can add new insights for children. Many children are enthusiastic when they get new lessons like English" (Teacher1,2022)

Teacher 2:

"It is important to learn English because it helps children develop their abilities and provides them with more opportunities as adults" (Teacher2,2022)

When children learn English at a young age, they become accustomed to it and it ceases to be a frightening experience. Children who master English are thought to have more skills that help them have a more enjoyable school life. In addition, learning English earlier can open up even more doors to knowledge. English is the language of knowledge and instruction for cutting-edge science, both online and offline. By mastering English, it is easier for children to get information and knowledge from abroad. English as a global language can also help children who later want to continue their education abroad, mastering English from an early age will certainly be very beneficial. Likewise, when people want to have a career, English is also very important in the world of work.

b. Interesting media are appropriate to use in learning English for children

Learning media helps in clarifying, facilitating, and making interesting learning messages that will be conveyed by the teacher to students so that they can motivate learning and the learning process becomes more efficient (Barrot, 2021). There are many media that we can apply as a means of learning English for children. They include pictures, videos, songs, games, and so on (Wahyuningsih, 2018, 2021; Wahyuningsih & Dewi, 2019). These can be used as media to teach English, especially to young learners.

c. Pictures and technology can be used as a means of learning English

A teacher must have a lot of skills and resources to teach in the classroom so that students have the basic knowledge. One of the effective sources of learning is the use of media which is an important factor to support the success of the learning process in the classroom (Yüksel et al., 2020). The use of picture media is very beneficial for children, including in learning English. Pictures can be used as a medium for teaching children. This can translate information to make it easier to understand.

Teacher 1:

"Regarding facilities or media for preschool age children, for example, you can use media that is used in everyday life, it can be concrete media, images or you can also use technology such as displays via LCDs and others" (Teacher1,2022)

Teacher 2:

"The right media for learning English for children is through music such as singing practice and media such as pictures or props that must be repeated, namely habituation" (Teacher2,2022)

Pictures used as learning media should meet several criteria, namely easy to make, easy to use or operate, and attractive. As well as there are several roles of pictures in learning English that really need to be understood, including pictures can motivate children and make them pay attention and participate in the process of learning English, contribute to being a reference in conversations or telling stories, provide information that will be discussed by children.

d. Media plays an important role in children's interest in learning English

Motivation is the driving force to do something or learn something that can come from within as well as from outside, therefore developing motivation is a challenge for teachers in providing learning tools in guiding children to achieve the expected learning progress. Teachers can start with something easy, for example from simple sounds to more complex sounds to form a series of words or sentences. Because it would be very good if learning a language starts with listening and then speaking, followed by reading and ending with writing skills.

e. Media as a tool to attract children's attention and motivate them in learning

As a teacher, it is imperative to be good at finding the right learning methods or media. The selection of learning methods and media can be a benchmark for whether children feel bored in their learning activities or instead feel enthusiastic about the methods applied by the teacher. Interesting and creative learning media can attract children's attention to learning.

Teacher 1:

"Media is important to attract children's attention when learning English because children can immediately see/do it directly when using learning media" (Teacher1,2022)

Teacher 2:

"Media/means help in clarifying, facilitating, and making interesting learning messages to be conveyed so that they can motivate learning and the learning process becomes more efficient" (Teacher2,2022)

With this media, children's learning focus can be improved. The learning media that can be an alternative to support children's learning activities is in the form of learning videos. Delivering the benefits of learning a foreign language to children will have a big impact on the growing enthusiasm for learning. because often children are not active, shy, reluctant, and even avoid using foreign languages at school. Teachers who are good at socializing are every child's dream teachers.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, teaching English in primary school is exceptionally beneficial for students as they enter junior high. It is caused by fundamental concepts learned in primary school. The higher levels, which span grades four through six, are more important for teaching English in primary school. Based on the results of the interviews, it was shown that teaching English using interesting media is essential viewed from the teachers' perspectives including English is used in any aspect of life to increase opportunity, interesting media are appropriate to use in learning English for children, pictures, and technology can be used as a means of learning English, media plays an important role in children's interest in learning English, media as a tool to attract children's attention and motivate them in learning. The result of the study promotes the need to get up-to-date for teachers related to the use of teaching media and technology in fostering students' motivation in learning English.

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