EFFORTS TO INTRODUCE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING USING TEACHING METHODS THAT ARE APPROPRIATE TO THE LEVEL AND QUALITY OF CHILDREN IN BLANG POROH VILLAGE

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Abstract

Recently, present English is not a compulsory subject at the elementary school level but only as one of the local content subjects. Even at the elementary school in Blang Poroh village, they were not introduced to English lessons. This is due to the lack of human resources in this field, whereas in reality most elementary schools in the city provide English as the compulsory subject. Economic factors and family educational background that cannot support additional lessons in the form of English learning courses are also factors inhibiting the low ability of Basic English in children. This further reinforces the stereotype that English is difficult to understand and learn. No learning English in elementary schools further weakens students' interest in knowing and learning English from scratch. Therefore, this service activity uses the Total

Physical Response (TPR) method is intended to provide an introduction to Basic English learning for children. The community service activity was in the form of an introduction to Basic English material with 22 children participating who were divided into several groups according to their respective levels. The materials presented included introducing, alphabet, numbers, days, things in classroom, family, asking permission, and giving expressions. The results of this community service show an increase in children's initial understanding of basic English. A good initial understanding of basic English will support children's ability to communicate using simple English in everyday life.

Keywords:*introduction to learning, teaching methods, quality of children*

Introduction

Village Blang Poroh is one of the villages in Muara Dua sub-district and is located in Lhokseumawe. The distance from the city to this village is about 1.5 KM. The majority of the residents of Blang Poroh village work as small traders who develop village MSMEs. The Keuchik who currently serves as the village head is Mr. Abdullah Z. In Muara Dua Sub-district, Balng Poroh Village has 3 hamlets consisting of hamlets A, B, and C.1.

In the field of education. This village still needs a lot of development and adequate human resources so that learning carried out in the village scope can be evenly distributed. English for Young Learners (EYL), which is often known as the language of instruction for early childhood, is currently developing throughout the world, especially in developing countries such as Indonesia. This phenomenon has developed in Indonesia since the issuance of the 1994 curriculum. This is in accordance with what was stated by Nasution (2018), that everyone's ability to use English well is very important to navigate the politics and culture of their country. According to Stakanova and Tolstikina (2014), learning English as a second language should be started as early as possible because it will be more beneficial for students in the long run and allow them to learn the language more effectively.

Important factorsin improving the level of English learning among elementary school students is the provision of English language instruction, according to a recent report (Gawi, 2012). Furthermore, Ur stated in Suwoto (2021) that young children feel afraid to see vivid, clear, and colorful images. However, according to Dar (2017), the language learning process will be easier if the teaching materials are interesting, relevant, and related to the subject matter. Three groups of learners were identified by Harmer (2007): children (children), adolescents (adolescents), and adults (adults). Young learners are those between the ages of 5 and 9; very young learners are those who are usually between the ages of 2 and 5; and children are those who fall into this category. In terms of age, they are on average between 5 and 12 years old.

Harmer (2007) also emphasized that one of the characteristics of children's learning is that they do not only focus on what is taught, but also learn various things during joint learning sessions, such as collecting information from their surroundings. Reading, understanding, and obeying teacher instructions during the teaching process. Abstract grammar is not very effective when taught to young children. Harmer (2007) also stated that the first and most important factor to consider when formulating conclusions about what is taught and how it is taught. Different people have different needs, skills, and cognitive abilities. Babies or young children are more likely to learn language through play than adults, while older people tend to learn more effectively through the use of abstract thinking. One common belief related to the relationship

between age and language learning is that children learn faster and more effectively than other age groups.

Harmer (2007) stated that the use of mimetic, actuating, and other tools by teachers to communicate meaningfully will help teachers maximize the use of English in the classroom. Therefore, teachers should teach students to speak English in a natural, advanced, and level-appropriate way. This shows that teachers are important and primary learners in learning English as a second or foreign language. Therefore, teachers should be adequate language models so that children have communication competence in the language they are learning. However, English learning that is not found by children in elementary schools and is also not used as a local content subject makes children find it difficult to learn it even though they have a high enough interest.

Community service carried out by students is a bright spot for the lack of knowledge and teaching skills as well as teacher education qualifications faced in the village. This condition certainly affects the quality of learning carried out even though the students are considered "capable" of carrying out learning. This situation became even more difficult when the government decided to eliminate English lessons for elementary education levels in the 2013 Curriculum. This is very different from the statement of Sya and Hermanto (2020) that 84% of public schools in several provinces in Indonesia currently offer English instruction.

Inadequate protection from the government and schools for children learning a foreign language can also be influenced by factors related to the local economy. They want their children to be able to use English, but they cannot afford to enroll them in English lessons or additional learning. This is in line with what Lubis et al. (2020) stated that economic problems in the family are what hinder education, because people want their children to get a good education but cannot afford it.

Learning for children is different from learning for adults where the basic characteristics of children are that they like to play and have short concentrations. With these characteristics, English teachers at the elementary school level should use teaching techniques that are appropriate for children's learning. Furthermore, it is stated that basic vocabulary is the most appropriate material for beginner learners. By using basic vocabulary, children can understand and learn to communicate with others. Scott and Ytreberg (2000) stated that if cooperation and communication become a language

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learning process and part of the development process, then learning should be packaged by teaching meaningful expressions. Regular use of language can increase students' independence in using language for communication purposes. Based on the description above, this Community Service Activity aims to introduce basic English knowledge and skills to children in the Blang Poroh Village area, Lhokseumawe, Aceh Province.

Research methods

Introduction to Basic English Learning for children in Blang Poroh Village, Lhokseumawe, Aceh Province needs to be done in order to improve participants' knowledge. So to achieve the goal, this community service activity uses the Total Physical Response (TPR) method. The TPR method is one of the methods for teaching language to early childhood because its application is related to the coordination of commands, speech and movement so that a child finds it easier to master a language in their learning. In TPR, grammar learning begins by presenting various examples, then the grammatical conclusions are drawn.

Grammar is taught together with vocabulary. Students first learn the meaning of vocabulary in the target language. As the teacher develops commands using longer sentences, students begin to learn grammar by observing actions and making associations between actions and commands. Students then try to test the correctness of their associations by giving some commands to their friends. Classroom objects and reality play an important role in the material for students who are complete beginners.

The TPR method is recommended as a suitable method for teaching English to children because it emphasizes long-term learning activities involving physical activity and movement. According to what we understand, the most negative characteristic of young children is their desire to play, which requires a lot of physical activity. Asher (2009:19) noted that children learn more words before they start playing when they learn their first language. This listening activity is accompanied by physical responses that come from reaching, grabbing, moving, looking, and so on. Because it has elements of movements that can be turned into games, this TPR method can provide a healthy start for children by preventing stress while they learn. There are three characteristics that must be understood when using the TPR method.

Asher (2009:187) outlines the following three basic principles of TPR: (1) Once a student demonstrates a thorough understanding of the language taught by the teacher, a conversation begins to flow. (2) Understanding is achieved through instruction in the language given by the teacher in the form of commands or orders. (3) A woman is urged to announce her intention to cycle. By using the TPR method, experts emphasize several things, as stated by Richard and Rogers (2010:87), who list them as follows:

1. The general aim of the TPR method is to teach oral language skills at the beginner level.

2. Sequential exercises are the main class activities in the TPR method.

3. Learners in TPR have the main role as listeners and performers. They listen attentively and respond physically to the commands given by the teacher, both individually and collectively.

4. Teachers play a role and are directly involved in TPR. Teachers are the ones who determine what is taught, who models and presents new material, and who selects supporting materials for classroom use.

5. Textbooks are not used in TPR. In this case, teachers must actively select and provide the necessary materials, such as books, pens, teaching aids, pictures, cards, and slides according to the desired situation and conditions.

Results and Discussion

Results and Discussion The following will present the results and discussion of the implementation of community service activities in Blang Poroh, Lhokseumawe, Aceh Province in the form of intensive coaching of basic English learning for village children. This community service activity is divided into several stages, namely observation, FGD, delivery of materials, and reflection.

a. Observation

The Community Service Team conducted initial observations at the project location with the main objective of disseminating basic information on the target subjects (through the Problem Identification process), the purpose of the observational study is to achieve the objectives of the community service study to the general public. This event will take place in the second week of February 2023. Some important notes obtained by the community service team from this observation project are:

a) Elementary school-aged children in Blang Poroh Village, Lhokseumawe, Aceh Province generally do not have basic English skills but have great motivation and desire to learn and master English.

b) There is a general societal need for children to be able to learn English as a second language at a young age through non-formal learning programs which, however, do not drain any economy for the majority of the society, who belong to the lower middle economic class.

The results of the problem identification revealed that children in Blang Poroh Village, Lhokseumawe, Aceh Province, who usually come from the middle-class economic class, do not have working knowledge of English. Despite the fact that they do this, they are motivated to learn even though it is informal and they do not teach others.

b. **Focus Group Discussion (FGD)**

After the observation process was carried out, the next step was to conduct a Focus Discussion Group (FGD). This FGD was carried out by the service team together with parents and community leaders in order to obtain a harmonious understanding and it is hoped that they will support each other in community service activities. From these results, it can be seen that the service activity in the form of introducing English was very much permitted by parents and supported by local community leaders. In the implementation process, the village also facilitated the local meunasah with a two-story building for the ground floor to be used as a place to develop this learning. However, there are also several notes that must be approved by the service team in carrying out the activity, namely that this activity does not involve any element of coercion, meaning that only children who are willing and who are given permission can participate in learning. This has also been agreed upon because the learning time must be adjusted to the majority of children's activities, be it reciting the Koran or others.

c. **Delivery of Material**

The delivery of the material was carried out informally to make it feel more relaxed and enjoyable. There were 22 children who participated in the English introduction activity. Learning was carried out 3 times a week, namely Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday starting from 14.00 - 16.00 WIB. The selection of time

was adjusted to the conditions of the children and the community service team. This activity was carried out from the third week of February to the third week of March 2023. The payment system was carried out on a rolling basis along with mathematics lessons due to the lack of English students carrying out community service in the village. So if on Tuesday the children study English, on Thursday they will study mathematics, and so on.

The topics given during the community service activities were introducing, alphabet, numbers, days, things in the classroom, family, asking permission, and giving expressions and basic vocabulary accompanied by questions or expressions used in the vocabulary. This is in line with the statement of Tamrin and Yanti (2019) that learning English with material that is close to the lives of students will be easier to understand by the students being taught. Unlike the first meeting, the community service providers did not provide any material but aimed to communicate more with the children who were taking part in the learning. This first meeting began with self-introduction by both the community service providers and the children at that time. The first session of this meeting did not use English as the medium of instruction. The initial purpose of this plan was also to prevent conflict between participants in an activity with the community service team or their own friends. The delivery of material should be done as structured as possible, namely there is an ongoing project for the beginning, middle, and end. Usually, the first day's activities focus on apperception as well as fostering student learning so that the material can be obtained easily.

In addition, the current session includes various practice sessions for vocabulary language, such as role-playing and other games interspersed in the learning process. As an example of the introductory material, after receiving

information, children are ready to understand and apply the information. Once the children are calm, they practice it in sequence. An example of this activity is as shown in the attached picture.

Reflection

Reflection activities are carried out as evaluation materials for the community service activities that have been carried out. The results of this reflection activity are carried out by the community service team by making several notes for the community service team itself and related parties. On the other hand, community service students also hold competitions to see how far the development of English language introduction has been through by the children of Blang Poroh village. The competitions held are varied, such as ranking one competitions and other competitions related to community service activities. The results of this reflection can also be recommendations for similar activities in the future. From the entire process of community service activities that have been carried out, it went well from the beginning to the end of the activity. This can be proven by several documentations of community service students with children and other village officials.

Discussion

The community service students have realized from before that with the age of children who are still at the elementary school level, the right material is in the form of vocabulary used in appropriate expressions that can be recognized by children because they are close to their daily lives. This is in accordance with what was conveyed by McKay (2007) that in early learners, when viewed from cognitive development, they are not yet able to think abstractly so that learning materials will be easier to accept if they imitate what is conveyed and use findings in everyday life compared to only using words.

After attending several learning sessions, it turned out that the young children already had a basic understanding of the need to learn a foreign language today, especially English. This is a key indicator of how successful they will be in learning English in the future. This is in line with what was stated by Muslimin (2018), who claimed that the single most important factor influencing learner success is their level of motivation when learning English. This is most likely a good assessment result when learning English for the first time. So enthusiastic, they often use Indonesian together during the teaching process because the latter is their mother tongue. Even the tutor sometimes conveys it in Acehnese so that the delivery of the material is more meaningful.

Teachers as tutors in this English material introduction activity have a significant role that can determine the success of the program. So that adequate knowledge of basic English and how to teach it is very important. This is in accordance with what was stated by Shulman in Mufidah (2019) who stated seven domains of knowledge that teachers need to understand to teach, namely general pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of students and how they learn, knowledge of subject matter, knowledge of pedagogical content, knowledge of other content, knowledge of the curriculum, and knowledge of educational goals. Related to this community service activity, the service team from the English Language Education Department is considered to have met the important components above.

Conclusion

Related to the implementation of community service activities with the theme "Efforts to Introduce English Learning Using Teaching Methods That Are Appropriate to the Level and Quality of Children in Blang Poroh Village", it can be concluded that the implementation of learning went well as seen from the response of the children participating in the activity. This can be seen when participants can understand and try to practice the learning materials provided. Related to the ongoing community service activities, the service team suggests several things, including:

1. Before participating in learning, parents are encouraged to motivate their children to participate in learning consistently.
2. The program can be continued in the form of more intensive English language training.

3. There is a need for more comprehensive activity preparation supported by better learning support facilities so that learning runs more optimally.

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