



ENGLISH TEACHING STRATEGIES IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN *KAMPUS MENGAJAR* PROGRAM

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abstract

Various studies have explored teachers' knowledge and views, proving that knowledge and beliefs play an important role in instructors' classroom decision-making. However, few have investigated teachers' knowledge and opinions about how effective strategies affect implementation. Focusing on the challenges and opportunities in *Kampus Mengajar Program* implemented by the English learning strategies in 16 elementary schools, this study aims to determine which technique is the most beneficial and what barriers participants face when implementing English learning in elementary schools as part of the *Kampus Mengajar Program*. The participants were 16 English Department students of Universitas Tidar who participated in *Kampus Mengajar Program*. A questionnaire with open ended questions was used as the instrument in this survey. Playing games, using songs, employing interactive media, and using repetition were the four most commonly used strategies in teaching English language skills to young learners in this program. These findings may be beneficial to those who teach English or work with young learners.

INTRODUCTION

English is not considered a second language in Indonesia since many Indonesians utilize the vernacular language as their mother tongue and Bahasa Indonesia as a second language. Thus English is just utilized in some situations for Indonesian as a foreign language (EFL). However, as one of the International languages, English is important to be learned, especially in the era of globalization where technology, social, political, economic, and even educational activities have no boundaries. Thus, learning English should begin from elementary school.

English subjects are introduced in class I-V according to the Ministry of National Education No. 23 of 2006, concerning graduation standards, "In general, the purpose of learning English in Indonesia is that a student or students must be able to demonstrate skills in listening, reading, writing, and speaking in English." However, in the 2013 curriculum that puts forward cultural values and character education, many assumptions about learning a foreign language will make it possible to lose their language (Indonesian). As a result, English is advised not to be part of teaching in elementary schools. In mid-2013, the government introduced the 2013 curriculum by appointing 2,598 sample schools for the elementary level throughout Indonesia (Zein, 2017). The sudden and unprepared change in the curriculum from KTSP to the 2013 curriculum caused several problems, starting from human resources and supporting facilities problems. In addition, foreign language subjects (English) are also excluded from local content for elementary school. In Permendikbud No. 67 of 2013, regarding the elementary school curriculum pages 9 - 10, no one alludes to the existence of English subjects in elementary school. Then the question arises about the position of English subjects as local

content or extracurricular. Therefore, in 2014, the ministry of education revised the 2013 curriculum to improve the current curriculum where the curriculum is still applied to sample schools. Schools that are not structurally and resource-ready can apply KTSP as a teaching guide. Based on this situation, schools that use KTSP remain to include language English as local content. Also, several schools that have implemented the curriculum in 2013 still include English as local content or as an extracurricular subject only. The execution of English subjects as local content became limited and resulted in the deficiencies of the English position for elementary school. It caused a difference in the content of the lessons between one school and another. English subjects were taught one hour of lessons each week, for 35 minutes of class IV to class VI (Faridatuunnisa, 2017).

The limited time for the implementation of English lessons causes the emergence of obstacles in the learning process. Learning difficulties are often found in learning English (Kurniawati, 2019). For example, the lack of motivation from the students is the result of the perception that it is not the right moment for them to learn a foreign language. Students' minimal knowledge of foreign languages also gives rise to the assumption that learning a foreign language is difficult. As a result, students in class become less active and less motivated to follow the learning course in class, and they tend to be busy with activities that distract from the lesson. In addition, less time to implement it in an environment that does not support them to interact using English poses a threat of failure to achieve the goals of learning English itself. Limited lesson hours are also a problem for students to practice and apply. All the problems above then become a challenge for teachers and prospective English teachers in elementary schools to find the right strategy so that the teachers can slowly overcome these stereotypes. Effective course delivery, high-quality course materials, effective lesson planning and management, effective student mentoring, effective academic advising, and the use of research, original creative work, and service to improve teaching are all factors considered when evaluating a teacher's performance (Arkam, 2015). Given the status of English lessons as extracurricular subjects regarded as less important than other main subjects in elementary school, the delivery of this material remains suboptimal even though teaching and introducing English at a young age is critical, especially for elementary school children to have a broad perspective in the face of globalization.

To overcome the obstacles mentioned above, the government then provides several solutions, one of which is the enactment of the "Kampus Mengajar" Program. According to Yuniarto (2021), Kampus Mengajar is part of the "Kampus Merdeka" program that allows students at college to develop their abilities outside of lecture activities. In Kampus Mengajar, students are placed in elementary and junior high schools throughout Indonesia after a selection process. The objective of this program is that understudies can show three perspectives in the schools they are set in, specifically parts of education: numeracy, literacy, and technology adoption. By and by, students who have a spot in the objective school will make a work program connected with the three angles referenced previously. The normal movement is in the study hall and shows parts of numeracy and education. Simultaneously, the rests are authoritative exercises and innovation variations that are not restricted to homerooms yet cover all pieces of the school. One understudy normally focuses on showing one class, and the understudy will go with the subject educator and permit instructing in the class. In educating learning materials, understudies need to layout great correspondence and strategies in the class.

One of the main focuses of activities in the Kampus Mengajar program is literacy. Elementary school students' language skills are still in the introduction stage, and this stage is crucial for the provision of students when entering higher education levels. Students between the ages of three and eight are considered young learners (Wilson, 2003; Alianello, 2004). Kampus Mengajar students are expected to be able to develop the language literacy of elementary school students through the development of effective learning strategies. Learning strategies, according to Oxford (1990), are specific actions that students do to make learning simpler, quicker, more pleasurable, more self-directed, more efficient, and more transferable to a new setting. Strategies were the specific activities manifested in the classroom that were consistent with a strategy and, therefore, were in harmony with the approach (Brown, 2001:14). Each teacher has a different strategy in delivering material in class

depending on the needs of their students or the learning goals they want to achieve. (Orlich et al., 2010) Deciding which teaching strategy should be applied in the class involves thoughtful design and planning. Erfan (2019) has observed that the most strategies used by the teacher in elementary school when teaching English are discussion, writing tasks, dialogues, and conversation.

Considering the importance of teaching strategies, students require the opportunity to develop their competence in the field. Hence, it is also necessary to pay attention to how the Kampus Mengajar program can facilitate the development of finding the proper strategies in teaching English for elementary school. As a result, the purpose of this study is to identify challenges and opportunities in the case of an English teaching strategy for elementary school in the Kampus Mengajar program that aims to achieve effectiveness in classroom learning. The researchers hope that the results of this study can contribute to students in terms of developing teaching strategies through the Kampus Mengajar program. Students are expected to gain teaching experience that can eventually get them ready to do interactive classes in teaching their future courses.

METHOD

This study utilized the subjective way to tackle the examination subject of deciding how Kampus Mengajar helps understudies improve their teaching strategy skills in the field. A subjective examination permits finding the beginning of a peculiarity, investigating potential purposes behind its event, systematizing how the peculiarity's experience affected those included, and deciding whether the experience made a hypothetical, reasonable cognizance related with the peculiarity (Williams & Moser, 2019). Qualitative exploration can serve inside and out viewpoint and comprehension of genuine issues, and it doesn't give a treatment, control information or measure predefined factors (Moser & Korstjens, 2017). Likewise, Qualitative information is nonreducible text, including words and visual conveyed in robust structure (for example, theater) or static (for example, paper), rather than personal information are mathematical, can be added, controlled, and show wasteful information show (Bansal K, Smith, & Vaara, 2018).

According to Winarta (2006: 155), the Qualitative descriptive analysis method analyzes, describes, and summarizes conditions, situations. Data collection was done by interviewing or observing the problems studied in the field. According to Chamot (2004), there are a variety of ways to watch how students acquire languages, including retrospective interviews, stimulated recall interviews, questionnaires, written diaries and journals, and think-aloud protocols while they are engaged in a learning task. This study uses a questionnaire to collect information from respondents to obtain new data. Each participant of the Kampus Mengajar Program answers the questions provided on the Google Form. An open-ended question was used to get a score for each question.

The Google Form provides some questions, as follows:

1. Is English a compulsory or extracurricular subject?
2. If it is mandatory, how do you as a student teach English for the first time as a teacher in the classroom?
3. What kind of strategies do you apply when teaching the material?
4. If it's extracurricular, what are the obstacles in English subjects?
5. What is your solution to overcome these obstacles?

Flow analysis models were mentioned by Miles and Huberman (1994:24) as a qualitative data analysis method. They divided flow analysis models into three flow activities that researchers used in this study. These analysis components are data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There were two main themes that emerged from the data analysis. The main themes were the challenges that English teachers faced when teaching English language skills and the strategies that teachers used to overcome those challenges. Several challenges and strategies were obtained from the 16 respondents who stated, which were then reduced to the four most widely challenges and strategies in teaching. The difficulties include skill gaps between students, learner characteristics, learner interest, and time constraints, while teachers' strategies included playing games, using songs, using interactive media, and repetition.

1. *Skill gaps between students*

Every teacher will discover that individual skill variations are usually the result of simultaneous interactions between hereditary and environmental influences, resulting in a unique human being (Turhusna & Solatun, 2020).

Participant 6: There may be a big gap in skills between one student to other since it is not compulsory.

Participant 4: It is extracurricular, the obstacle is that it's a little bit difficult to ask students for joining this subject. The skills between one another are also different, so I should give more attention to the students.

2. *Learner characteristics*

Every student has a distinct personality. Some students appear to be enthusiastic and easily adapt to new environments. There are also student characters who are cautious when adjusting to new situations. There are also student characters who are slow to adapt and prone to emotional outbursts. Teachers found that learner characteristics become challenge when they are teaching students.

Participant 11: Because in elementaty, so there are many students who can't be silence during learning.

Participant 14: Because some students are passive, I approach them. Good interactions can be formed later if there is feedback, so that learning goes well and students can easily learn the material.

3. *Learner interest*

The inconsistency of the young learners' characteristics results in their interest to learn. Young learners are sometimes interested to learn, but they are also uninterest at times. Young learners will only learn if they want to, and they will not learn if they do not want to. The participants reported that their students' interest to learn English fluctuated.

Participant 14: lack of student interest in learning a material because they already think that English is difficult.

Participant 16: Because it's just an extra subject, the students do not have much knowledge about English so it's quite difficult to teach English, even just the basic vocabulary of English.

4. *Time constraints*

Because English in elementary school is only an extracurricular subject, the learning time is shorter. This then becomes one of the causes of the less than optimal delivery of material to students.

Participant 1: I asked help to the teacher to made some make-up class in the saturday.

Participant 9: In our case, unless the 6th students, the other class cannot learn English in the school, because there were no active exctracurricular due to government decree at that time because of pandemic.

Participant 13: Limited time to study becomes my obstacle.

5. *Teacher's strategies*

The findings revealed that teachers used a variety of strategies to address challenges in teaching English language skills to young learners. The participants reported that playing games, singing, and using interactive media were the most popular and beneficial strategies for motivating their students to learn English. Furthermore, as an alternative to the traditional method of teaching vocabulary, repetition was used.

According to the participants,

Participant 4: For strategy I used game as a stimulus to engage the students' activity.

Participant 11: I always use some kinds of song or games in the middle of teaching the material.

Participant 14: Using interactive learning media such as showing animated videos in order to improve the audio-visual skills of students, after that we can ask students to join QnA sessions and discussion with other students to measure their undstanding. At the end, the teacher will give a feedback and conclusion about the material learned by students.

Participant 16: I use repetition strategy.

This research was aimed to focus on the challenge and opportunities in Kampus Mengajar Program by implementing the English learning strategies in Elementary Schools. We discovered that English teachers faced difficulties when teaching English language skills to young learners. In addition, we discovered some strategies used by teachers in teaching English language skills to young learners. While teaching, teachers found some challenges, first challenge was skill gaps between students. Every teacher will discover that individual skill variations are usually the result of simultaneous interactions between hereditary and environmental influences, resulting in a unique human being (Turhusna & Solatun, 2020). As a result, as a teacher, individuals should be able to understand the characteristics and properties of each individual or student. Specific ways and methods and apply them directly in learning so that they know the differences of their students and how to overcome them in ways that students can easily capture or comprehend. The teacher found this aspect as one of challenge in teaching young children in elementary school. Second challenge was about Learner characteristics, every student has a distinct personality. Some students appear to be enthusiastic and easily adapt to new environments. There are also student characters who are cautious when adjusting to new situations. Also student characters who are slow to adapt and prone to emotional outbursts. Teachers should know every students characters to make a strategy that appropriate to teach the students. Third challenge was learner interest. The inconsistency of the young learners' characteristics results in their interset to learn. Young learners are sometimes interested to learn, but they are also uninterested at times. Young learners will only learn if they want to, and they will not learn if they do not want to. The participants reported that their students' interest to learn English fluctuated. How teachers are supposed to find spesific strategies that can improve student's interest they can use method of

playing games, using songs, or use another media such as video or youtube. Last challenge was time constraints, because English in elementary school is only an extracurricular subject, the learning time is shorter. This then becomes one of the causes of the less than optimal delivery of material to students.

The investigation of this study looked not only at the challenges, but also at four strategies used by teachers to solve them. The participants generally investigated the use of four enjoyable methods as a solution in teaching English language skills to young learners. Games, song, interactive media, and repetition are among the methods. One of them is to make use of games. Games are favorite and fun activities for young learners in learning for teachers. Participants in this study stated that games could assist them in increasing the motivation of young learners in the learning process. Making English as fun activity, for example, by inviting students to play games while learning, such as high five and stand up and be continued. Furthermore, games assist young learners in reaching and comprehending lessons, as Pinter (2006) stated that young learners learn through play. According to the respondent, one of the fun activities that can make young learners enjoy the lesson is singing. Songs have the ability to stimulate young learners' learning. It makes it easier for them to remember the lesson. Garton, Copland, and Burn (2011) discovered that many teachers used song to keep young learners' attention while they were learning. Then, the next strategy implemented by the respondent was the used of interactive media such as youtube and flashcard to stimulus the student interest in learning english. The respondent's final strategy for dealing with the challenges and difficulties was repetition. They used repetition as one of their strategies to assist their young students in expanding their vocabulary and pronunciation. This strategy was implemented because many of the young students lacked vocabulary.

In increasing understanding of the topic that taken in this analysis, the researchers presented two similar studies. The first reasearch was conducted by (Erfan, 2018) The result of this study found that the strategy teacher's teaching used in speaking at SDN An Nahl, Jambi City using recordings & transcripts, dialogues, discussions, conversations class and casual chat. Teachers use this technique because it is based on handbook and easy to practice. Some other strategy sometimes used by teachers, but the frequency is very rare.

The second research was conducted by Sari (2018) who found that most teachers use games as a strategy to teach their students. This strategy is an effective technique to facilitate students to learn English. The teachers think that the use of games in teaching English is an effective and interesting activity to do in their classrooms.

CONCLUSION

It is challenging to teach English as a foreign language to young learners. Many factors should be considered by teachers in ways to encourage young learners in learning. Based on the research finding and discussion, there are four strategies used by the teacher in the teaching process. They are (1) using games, (2) using songs, (3) using interactive learning media, (4) using repetition. It was discovered that some strategies used by teachers in teaching English language skills using games could help them increase the motivation of young learners by inviting them to participate in playing games while learning, as Pinter (2006) stated that young learners learn through playing. From all the strategies until the repetition, are the strategies that are used by the teachers in developing English learning in elementary schools. However, there are also challenges in conducting English learning, one of them is the

learners characteristic. Every student has his or her own unique personality. Some students appear energetic and adjust well to new situations. Teachers were challenged to instruct the young students. They were particularly challenged not only to teach language skills but also to motivate them to learn because their behavior in the classroom is unpredictable. Furthermore, the limited time presents a challenge for Kampus Mengajar participants in making the best use of it in English teaching. With all the challenges, fortunately every teacher has its solution or strategy to handle and face the teaching process. Hope this research could help those who want to teach English, especially in elementary schools.

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