

TEACHING ENGLISH TO YOUNG LEARNERS

Agitha Mulyadi

E-Mail: Agithamulyadi@gmail.com

Universitas PGRI Palembang

* E-Mail: Agithamulyadi@gmail.com

Abstrak

Mengajar bahasa Inggris untuk young learners (TEYL) berbeda dengan orang dewasa. Oleh karena itu, para guru bahasa Inggris TEYL perlu memahami, mengetahui dan menerapkan prinsip-prinsip, teori-teori pengajaran bahasa untuk young learners dan manajemen kelas bahasa. Selain itu, guru bahasa Inggris tidak hanya dituntut untuk dapat mengajar dengan baik tetapi juga mengetahui apa yang harus diperhatikan dalam merancang bahan ajar. Untuk mencapai tujuan para guru TEYL harus mengetahui dan menerapkan teori dan metode yang tepat karena lebih cepat untuk meningkatkan motivasi dan antusiasme young learners daripada orang dewasa tetapi juga lebih mudah kehilangan motivasi dan antusiasme mereka daripada orang dewasa. Selain itu, untuk bahan ajar, guru harus melakukan analisis kebutuhan untuk memenuhi kebutuhan, keinginan, dan kekurangan karena young learners memiliki rentang perhatian yang pendek, cepat lupa, dan young learners belajar cenderung melalui pengulangan yang bisa membosankan

Kata kunci: *pengajaran, young learners, bahan ajar, manajemen kelas*

Abstract

English is different from that of adults for young learners. English teachers to young learners must therefore understand, know and use language teaching methods, theories - learning to young learners and administration of language classrooms. Moreover, in Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) English teachers must not only be able to successfully teach, but also know what to take into account in the creation of teaching materials. To reach the goal of the TEYL teachers should know and apply the appropriate theories and method since it is quicker to raise young learners' motivation and enthusiasm than adults' but it is also easier to loose their motivation and enthusiasm than it is with adults. Besides, for teaching materials, the teachers should do need analysis in order to meet needs, wants, and lacks since young learners have short attention spans, forget things quickly, and young learners learn through repetition which can be boring.

Keywords: *teaching, young learners, teaching materials, classroom management*

1. Introduction

Young learners education basically aims to provide stimulation to all aspects of child development, including physical, intellectual, social, emotional and language development so that they can develop optimally. Each aspect of the child's development affects each other.

Teachers of young learners should realize that they should not make their child's age the basis for their maturity.

There are several factors that influence children's maturity, including their culture, their environment (in the city or in the village), gender, expectations of their parents and so on.

Thus, any activities that we provide to young learners, including the provision of English lessons, must be adjusted to their abilities and stages of development. The teaching and learning of English offers young learners English skills at a golden

age – the age when children can easily learn anything. The two are known as linguistic skills and language performance. Chomsky in Clark and Clark (1977: 6) noted that linguistic competence is defined as the ability of the individual to use a language, while linguistic performance, the actual implementation of that ability is specified in language speech and listening. Brown (1987: 24) has also argued that competence refers to the basic knowledge of a system, event, or reality. The ability to achieve something is not observed, idealized, to perform. Meanwhile, performance is the obvious and actual embodiment or realization of skill. It is the real thing to do: walk, sing, dance or speak. Based on the previous description, this paper discusses Principles and Methods of Teaching English to young learners, classroom management, and what to consider in designing teaching materials in order to make sense of new language for the learners.

2. Principles of Teaching English to Young Learners

Teachers must understand the concepts of acquisition and learning when teaching English to young learners. The process of acquiring language, whether naturally or unconsciously, is known as acquisition. Learning, on the other hand, is the deliberate acquisition of language. According to Krashen and Terrell (1983: 18), learning a language entails "picking it up," or "growing linguistic capacity by utilizing it in real, communicative contexts."

Children learn their first language and, most likely, their second language. Language acquisition is not the same as language learning. Learning a language entails 'knowing the rules,' or having a cognitive understanding of grammar. According to new research, formal language acquisition is not nearly as significant as previously thought in acquiring communicative ability in second languages.

However, how young learners learn English as well as how to teach it is highly dependent on their developmental level. Young learners respond to language based on what it does or what they can do with it. Young learners have the advantage that they like to imitate and they are often not aware of themselves and usually they are ready to enjoy the activities that have been prepared by the teacher for them. These factors mean it is easy to maintain a high level of motivation and make teaching English an enjoyable and enjoyable experience for young learners.

In providing English subject matter, teachers must adjust it to young learners' level of development. The scope of material that can be given to young learners may include the following:

- Names of colors
- Numerals
- Family
- Animals
- Fruits and Vegetables
- Parts of the body
- Demonstrative pronouns: There is
There are
- Singular/Plural subjects such as I, You
- Simple Classroom commands such as stand up, sit down, open your book, etc.

The limitation above is the scope of teaching English for young learners in general. All or not given or even added with other material depending on the ability of the learners and the teacher who knows better. The environment in which they live for instance in rural or in urban areas is very influential on the level of mastery of English for young learners.

Below are some things that need to be considered in providing activities for teaching English to young learners:

- Activities should be simple enough for them to understand.
- The tasks given should be according to their abilities.
- Activities should be mostly based on spoken language (oral), of course

for young learners listening activities are also given a fairly large portion.

- Writing activities should be avoided for early childhood.

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3. Method of Teaching English to Young Learners

Piccolo (2010) defined teaching English to young learners as teaching learners aged 3 to 11 years old. It is different from teaching English to adults or even teenagers. Furthermore, young learners are distinct social beings with their own set of cultural norms.

Through experiences, young pupils learn that children in primary or primary school are generally at an operational stage of cognitive development by manipulating things, as mentioned in Piaget, in Hudelson (1991:256). This means learners learn by doing - through looking at and handling objects in their surroundings. As a result, it is critical that English teachers employ media or practical ways to present things that learners can understand.

Furthermore, young learners also learn in groups in which they meet each other through a social context. Vygotsky said in Hudelson (1991: 257) that children learn in social circumstances when some members of the group know more than others. Therefore, teaching English should be like social contexts in their teaching situations.

As a result, in order to give excellent educational services to young learners, we must first understand their features and needs as they relate to their developmental stage. That way we can provide activities that suit their needs and in the right way.

According to the world of young learners, they learn via play (learning through play) and play is a learning process for them (playing is learning), thus we present them with activities that suit their world, namely playing. There are several methods or ways of providing activities for teaching English, including:

- Action-packed games and songs.

- Activities that require a total physical response.

- Color-by-number, cut-by-number, and stick- by-number assignments.

- Simple repeating stories, as well as simple repetitive speaking tasks...

The English teaching methods mentioned above are activities that have communicative value in language. These activities will have communicative value if they are packaged in three phases called triple PPP, Presentation, Practice, and Production. Harmer (2007) claimed that PPP technique is a common way to introduce a new word to the students in EFL classroom. The procedures of using PPP are as follows.

The Presentation Phase

The teacher introduces some vocabulary during the delivery stage, and three things must be made clear: what it means, when it is used, and how it is spoken.

The Practice Phase

It is very important to make sure that learners get enough opportunities to practice English. They can do listening and speaking activities by imitating and repeating. They can perform individually, in pairs, or in groups. However, we have to keep in mind that the practice of speaking English can only be done if the learner has understood the English they are using.

The Production Phase

At this stage of the production phase, learners are expected to use the English they have learned after leaving class. For example singing English songs, memorizing poetry or telling others about the English they already have.

Furthermore, as Cameron (2003) points out, Piaget believes that a young learner is an active learner. Piaget is interested in how young children interact with the world around them and how this affects their mental development.

Furthermore, young learners look for intentions and goals in what they watch others do, applying their knowledge and experience to their attempts to make sense of others' actions and words. Recognizing that young learners are active "sense-makers," but that their sense-making is constrained by their prior experiences. Next, young learners are increasingly recognized as capable, active actors of their own conceptual development.

Then, three aspects must be considered and addressed in teaching English to young learners as follows.

a. Language chunks

When students practice in English, they must use phrases that have full meaning, that is to say language phrases. The learners can thus easily understand the function of language as a means of communicating, although they do not know the meaning of sentences they use such as, "Good morning", "Good afternoon", "Never mind", "Thank you", and so forth.

The students may not initially know the meaning of the phrases intended but understand the use of those phrases. They say "Good morning," for instance, when meeting their friends the day they say, "Good afternoon," when their friends give them something, they say, "Thank you", and so on. This is in line with the statement by Abe (1991:266) that language teachers must treat language as natural chunks.

b. Using media

The use of the media to teach young learners English helps teachers to build a better life in classrooms. The media also helps teachers produce materials and helps students to understand the materials. We can use flash cards, photos and various objects and materials instead of reading, in order to bring out the classroom and to resemble the outside world more closely. Using these tools can help the teacher become more observer and facilitator and

enjoy the language and the potentially wonderful experience of communication with others from around our vast world in another language (Abe, 1991: 266-267).

c. Topic-based activities

Topic-based activities are usually called The topic approach or topic-based work (Hudelson, 1991:258) (Krashen, 1983: 84). Theme-based activities begin with a student-focused topic, which is then designed to engage the students into the study of the subject and use the language as an integral part of the research core.

The topic approach begins with an issue that is relevant and/or of interest to the students, and then designs activities to study this topic and use language as an integral and central element in the study. Advocates of the topic approach suggest that if learners focus on a subject or topic in which they have an interest or concern, they will most likely use the new language (Hudelson, 199: 258).

Furthermore, English teachers must be aware of the types of resources available to young learners in the learning process. Learning resources are not supplemental knowledge for fun, but rather primary content that are organized and learned as engaging activities that learners do in their daily life. Learning resources must be suited for their aptitude, will, and environment, among other factors. Ideal teachers of English are therefore those who know English songs and English games. Furthermore, they can order these materials to be interesting.

4. Management of the English Classroom and Atmosphere.

Classroom management and the situation in the classroom are part of the successful teaching process. Good management of the classroom and the favorable situation will lead to good teaching results.

Classroom management therefore needs special attention, particularly in language classrooms in which students

should communicate in the target language. As a result, students must be able to learn how to deal with such a situation. A good and conducive classroom will help teachers to create a classroom atmosphere, which will help young learners to successfully learn English. English teachers should therefore have the abilities, behavior, help students feel safe, the physical environment and arrangement of desks and chairs that Scott and Ytreberg (1983) have proposed.

a. Abilities

Teachers should be able to sing songs and tell stories, as well as design exercises to keep the classroom atmosphere lively.

b. Attitudes

The teachers respect the students and all learners seem to like themselves because they have a strong sense of fairness.

c. Helping the learners feel secure

Feeling safe helps students to optimally understand the materials. The following points ensure that the students feel safe.

1. Learners have to feel that the teacher is responsible for what is happening.
2. The teacher respects the learners.
3. The teacher listens to the learners - mistakes as well.
4. The teacher doesn't mind students getting things wrong and saying that when they learn the new language, they make mistakes.
5. For example, at the beginning of classes, the teacher establishes the routines of greeting students.
6. The teacher is responsible for teaching theoretical and practical work in the classroom.
7. The teacher prevents the organization of the classroom competition.
8. The teacher does not give physical awards or prizes to students who make them jealous.
9. The teacher does not give English names to the learners.

d. The physical surrounding

Young learners normally respond well to an enjoyable and familiar environment so that stuff like photographs, calendars, posters and so on should be put on the wall if possible. These visual aids should be provided with subtleties so that students can easily discover the English word for objects in the pictures.

e. Arrangement of the desks and chairs

In English the desks and chairs are suggested to be light and to be movable and to be changed. The aim is to change the arrangements of the table and chairs in order to ensure that students will not get bored by a static situation. The aim is to have different classroom environments. The design model of table and chair arrangements is adapted to the intended purpose and situation to facilitate the process of teaching.

5. Conclusion

There are several factors that must be taken into account to achieve the aim of teaching English for young learners. These factors include the teaching of English to students, the learning method for young students, the management of the English and the environment and consideration when designing materials. These factors are important.

English teachers could determine how young learners learn English through their social activities after knowing the main and teaching language theories of young learners in general. In the course of the teach-learning process, the management of the English classroom and environment depends on what activities are undertaken, so that students are interested in participating in the class instead of getting bored. However, in order to achieve the objective of teaching English to young learners, teachers of English must be aware, not only of the language ability development of learners in general, but also of and desired for their learners – particularly the characteristics of the

learner. They could then teach properly because at a certain age they teach. Briefly, teachers should consider about who their students are and why they are learning English. As a result, they are able to create materials and, of course, teach students in a social and financial context; as a result, students master English rather than acquire it.

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