



## THE BENEFITS OF LEARNING ENGLISH IN EARLY CHILDHOOD: POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EFFECT

Kuntum Trilestari<sup>1</sup>, Ria Maya Lestari Manurung<sup>2</sup>, Venny Nurcahaya Simangunsong<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Universitas Tamansiswa Palembang

E-mail : [kuntum@unitaspalembang.ac.id](mailto:kuntum@unitaspalembang.ac.id)

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Corresponding Author:

Kuntum Trilestari

Email Corresponding :

[kuntum@unitaspalembang.ac.id](mailto:kuntum@unitaspalembang.ac.id)

### ABSTRACT

The study focuses on the crucial role of teaching foreign languages, particularly English, to young children as a means to enhance their knowledge and overall development. Employing a descriptive analysis methodology based on literature studies, the research aims to identify both the positive and negative impacts of introducing English during early childhood. To ensure a structured approach, the study establishes specific criteria as limitations for data collection. The findings reveal that learning English at a young age yields numerous benefits, while also acknowledging potential negative effects. This comprehensive examination of the subject provides valuable insights into the complexities of early language acquisition and its implications for child development. The study's novelty lies in its balanced approach, considering both the advantages and potential drawbacks of early English language education, which can inform educational practices and policies moving forward.

*Keywords: Learning English, Benefit, Early Childhood, Positive and Negative Learning English.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, learning English is crucial as it's become a universal language for communication, and it's crucial to start teaching English to kids at a young age. The better and easier it is for them to learn foreign languages, the sooner foreign languages—English in particular—are taught. Suhendan (2013) states that there is a far greater likelihood of foreign language proficiency—that is, speaking like native speakers without an accent—for kids under the age of eleven or twelve. According to Suyanto (2005), the early years—often referred to as the "golden age"—are crucial for a child's intellectual development. These years span from 0 to 8 years old. Instead of just being repetitious, the development process proceeds throughout this time in

a more sophisticated and irreversible way. It is imperative to acknowledge that this stage, sometimes referred to as the "golden age," is extremely important for promoting the best possible development in every area of a child's development. Drawing from Berk (1992, p. 18) The term "early childhood" refers to the period between 0 and 8 years old, during which time there is a swift and varied advancement in all facets of human existence. The term "early childhood" describes the period between 0 and 6 years old, which experts view as a crucial and magical time that profoundly affects a child's future development. Before this golden age ends, it is imperative that youngsters be introduced to all facets of language. Early life is marked by distinctive uniqueness since every child

**Vol 7, No 2 (2024): ESTEEM**

has special qualities and innate abilities that are given to them as a gift from God. Unique characteristics in the physical, psychological, social, and moral domains are present in early life (Rohmah, 2018).

**2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The ideal time to start learning English as a second language is before puberty. Chomsky, an authority on English, asserts that there is a neurologically based "critical period" that ends around puberty and during which total mastery of a language is achievable. Individuals have a sensitive time, also called the "critical period," during which language acquisition is simpler and occurs more quickly, according to Chomsky. The process of teaching a foreign language includes teaching vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, among other language elements. Suyanto goes on to say that learning activities for foreign or second languages entail the development of language competencies and skills, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing. These are taught integratively and incorporated into daily life. English is a language that is frequently taught in schools as part of the curriculum, and it can be helpful for a variety of things, like competing internationally or looking for jobs in the future that need communication with foreigners.

Since early childhood education covers both native Indonesian and other languages like English, language and communication skills are crucial. In ordinary talks, Indonesians frequently employ foreign languages, such as English, for everything from basic greetings to formal phrases. From kindergarten through higher education,

English is taught as a topic in formal education.

In the field of developmental psychology, theories of Piaget and Vygotsky are widely used, especially to understand how young language learners interact with foreign languages. Children are active learners and thinkers, in Piaget's view. They actively look for answers to the issues they run into and engage in constant social interaction with their surroundings. Instead of just copying what they see around them, children create their own learning process. Piaget maintained that because children are naturally curious about their surroundings, they continually try to understand them by asking questions. Children demonstrate purpose and intentionality in their activities and questions from a young age. The four main stages of a child's cognitive development—sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational—correspond to escalating complexity and advance with age, according to Piaget (quoted in Mukhlisah, 2015). Every kid goes through these phases in a particular order, according to Piaget, with each stage building on the one before it. Although the speed at which children move through these stages may vary, no child can completely skip a stage. Piaget's stages of cognitive development can be summarized as follows:

1. Sensorimotor stage (0-2 years): During this stage, children develop the ability to form concepts and manipulate objects. They progress from reflexive behaviours to goal-directed behaviours.
2. Preoperational stage (2-7 years): In this stage, children start to use

**Vol 7, No 2 (2024): ESTEEM**

symbols to represent objects and engage in symbolic play. However, their thinking remains egocentric and centered on their own perspective.

3. Concrete operational stage (7-11 years): In this stage, children show improvements in logical thinking. They acquire the ability to perform reversible operations and their thinking becomes less centered and limited by egocentrism. However, abstract thinking is still challenging.
4. Formal operational stage (11 years old - adulthood): During this final stage, individuals develop the capacity for abstract thinking and can use purely symbolic representations. They can solve problems through systematic experimentation and engage in hypothetical and deductive reasoning.

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**Vol 7, No 2 (2024): ESTEEM**

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**1. Total Physical Response (TPR) Method**

Total Physical Response (TPR) is a teaching approach that stresses the synchronisation of verbal and physical activities, according to Richards and Suhendan (2013). It entails involving pupils in educational activities that require them to listen as well as respond by acting. When the instruction was "sit down," for example, in the TPR technique, every child would physically sit down and listen to the instruction at the same time. In a similar vein, they would get up in response to the command to "stand up". According to Ummah (2017), a study carried out at RA. Nurul Hikmah Pamekasan found that when teachers included physical response activities, most kindergarten pupils showed a better degree of enthusiasm in learning English. For kindergarten students, the Total Physical Response (TPR) paradigm of English instruction is considered appropriate and productive. Ratminingsih (2017) discovered that the Total Physical Response (TPR) approach consists of seven essential features: The principal aim of this approach is to facilitate students' acquisition and proficient usage of the target language in pleasurable and engaging contexts.

Compared to training adults, teaching English to young children—especially in kindergarten—presents unique problems. Teachers need to be persistent and patient with their students. One approach that is frequently used to teach English to young children is the Total Physical Response (TPR) approach. Dr. James J. Asher, a psychology

professor at San Jose State University in California, United States, created TPR, or Total Physical Response (Nugraheni & Kristian, 2019). Mulyanah et al. (2018) claim that TPR is a well-known teaching strategy that introduces early childhood learners to words linked to actions or motions. There is a competitive push to enrol kids in English language learning programmes as a desirable ability due to the community's increased interest in foreign language proficiency (Fahrurrozi, 2017). The TPR approach is accessible to both teachers and students since it lays a strong emphasis on giving clear command instructions that incorporate bodily movements (Fahrurrozi, 2017).

According to Wijayatiningsih and Mulyadi (2014), the TPR Method offers several advantages in teaching English to young children, including:

1. Encouraging active engagement: This method actively involves children in the learning process, creating a relaxed and comfortable learning environment for them.
2. Enhancing memory retention: The TPR Method aids memory by associating gestures with words, allowing children to better remember and recall vocabulary.
3. Focusing on listening skills: This method places emphasis on listening comprehension before children are prompted to respond and follow commands.

**2. The Game Method**

Teaching language to kids through games is a fun way to do it. Children can learn more quickly and easily with the use of games, according to Huyen and Nga (quoted in Wulanjani, 2016). Additionally, games foster a relaxed and stress-free atmosphere that improves

**Vol 7, No 2 (2024): ESTEEM**

children's retention of educational content. By using spelling games as an instructional strategy, teachers may help students reach their full potential in terms of their physical, mental, and intellectual capacities. Through interactive spelling games, this method actively involves kids in the learning process. Paul (as mentioned in Qiu, 2016) emphasises that kids struggle to focus, have poor self-control, and frequently lose interest in simple education in favour of fun. It is therefore crucial to offer engaging and useful strategies, like spelling games, to hold their attention and improve their educational experience.

**3. The Storytelling Method**

The storytelling method is not only a traditional approach but also a modern learning tool that serves a dual purpose. It not only aids in teaching language and providing enjoyable experiences but also plays a crucial role in guiding and fostering the psychological and physical well-being of children, helping them become well-adjusted individuals in their social environment (Isik, 2016). Arinoviani, Pudjawan, and Antara (2016) conducted research on the implementation of the Storytelling Method to enhance the English skills of a specific group of children in extracurricular activities.

Gagne and Briggs (1975) identified various learning media that encompass physical tools used to deliver teaching content. These tools include books, tape recorders, tapes, video cameras, video recorders, films, slides, photographs, pictures, graphics, television, and computers. Ideally, English learning in early childhood should employ enjoyable methods that

incorporate media with audio, visual, and interactive features.

Another application that turns out to be able to build the enthusiasm of early childhood in learning English is in the field of art. According to Widiputera (2004), there are multiple methods and techniques available for English learning, including storytelling, role play, hands-on arts and crafts, games, show and tell, and music and movement activities that involve singing. Moeslichatoen (1999) discusses the relevance of teaching and learning processes and proposes several practical methods that align with the principles of creativity, activity, and enjoyable learning, specifically for early childhood English education. These methods include play and singing, conversational activities, storytelling, demonstrations, field trips, projects, and assignments.

We already know that learning a foreign language is certainly good for early childhood, but it definitely faces some difficulties. According to Oktaria and Putra (2020), although English is a foreign language in Indonesia, it holds significant importance in early childhood education. Teaching English to children from a young age is crucial as it is an international language used worldwide, facilitating communication beyond Indonesia's borders. Many formal schools have implemented early stimulation programs to introduce learning to children, starting with vocabulary, fruits, alphabets, and numbers (Pangastuti et al., 2020). Machackova (2009, p.15) provides a more detailed explanation regarding the challenges learners face in relation to listening skills, particularly in English. These difficulties include:

**Vol 7, No 2 (2024): ESTEEM**

1. Difficulty understanding pronunciation.
2. Inability to keep up with the speaker's speaking speed.
3. Challenges in reproducing what has been heard.
4. Limited vocabulary knowledge.
5. Difficulty concentrating or sustaining focus.
6. Differences in shared knowledge leading to varying interpretations.

In addition to the methods described above, there are also several other methods of implementing English language learning at an early age that are suitable. According to Matondang (2005), music and movement are very effective methods for teaching English, especially for early childhood. Music, which involves arranging tones or sounds in a certain order, combination and temporal relationship, creates a composition that has unity and continuity. Motion, on the other hand, refers to movement, which occurs as a result of an impulse or emotional response after listening to a song or rhythm.

Influences Faced in Applying English to Children who are not early anymore. Influencing Factors in Early English Language Learning in older children (Wijayatiningsih & Mulyadi, 2014):

- a. Mother tongue instincts: The instincts, characteristics, and skills developed while learning the mother tongue or first language greatly assist children in acquiring a new language, such as English.
- b. Teaching materials: Selecting age-appropriate materials and incorporating learning techniques that align with the child's interests can

- enhance student engagement. Children pay greater attention to topics that pique their interests, such as pets, football, family, and hobbies.
- c. Social interaction: Positive communication and warm interactions between students and teachers foster a sense of safety and increase self-confidence in learning a new language.
  - d. Learning media: Early childhood learning becomes more effective when using real objects, images, puppets, and miniatures as teaching aids makes the material presentation more engaging and enjoyable for children.
  - e. Family background: The family or social background of children can also influence their success in learning English. The availability of dictionaries, books, and other resources at home, as well as parental support, play a significant role.

Teaching English to children in their daily lives, as suggested by Latifah Nurfauziah (2013), can be done through various methods. Language learning can take place in formal settings such as language courses or non-school educational institutions, as well as at home with the involvement of parents who are accustomed to speaking English. Here are some approaches:

- 1) Utilizing picture books: Using picture books as a teaching medium can introduce children to new worlds and enhance their English learning experience.
- 2) Singing songs and rhymes: Repetition of rhymes and songs in a fun and engaging manner can aid in remembering English words and phrases.

**THE BENEFITS OF LEARNING ENGLISH IN EARLY CHILDHOOD:  
POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EFFECT**

- 3) Reading aloud: Reading picture books aloud and bringing stories to life can captivate children's interest and enhance their language learning experience.
- 4) Creating an English corner or table: Designating a specific area in the house as an English-focused space can provide a dedicated environment for language learning. This area can include games, a mini-library with picture books, displays related to British culture (such as photos and flags), visual aids, homemade books, or crafts. English can be used to label and identify objects in this area.

Another method for early childhood English learning is vocabulary development. According to Marlianingsih (2016), children learn two types of vocabulary: specific vocabulary and general vocabulary, which are appropriate for their age level. Examples of vocabulary children learn include colors, numbers, and time. Basic vocabulary consists of kinship terms, body parts, pronouns, key numbers, essential verbs, basic adjectives, and common objects. According to French Allen, as cited in Purwaningsih, Sari & Purwandari (2017), the material taught to children is derived from familiar and relatable objects in their immediate surroundings, such as body parts, family members, animal names, and more. One effective technique is the use of flash cards, where teachers can show pictorial cards to students and engage them in listening and demonstrating activities based on the pictures.

## **METHODS**

The research method used is qualitative with a literature review approach. The rationale for using this method is appropriate to the research objective that examine the literature. Researchers examined the contents of research in journals of 20 articles as references. According to Masbadar (2012), English is the main medium of communication for people in the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and in other countries. English is the official language of many Commonwealth countries and is widely understood and spoken. English is spoken in more countries around the world than any other language and compared to any other language except Chinese, it is also spoken by more people. Method the collecting data sources are: keyword search, term subject search, search for the latest scientific papers, and search for other sources in scientific sources. The examined sources are relevant to the research topic: the benefits of learning English in early childhood that is positive and negative effect.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **What is the positive effect from learning English for early childhood**

The positive effects of learning English in early childhood can be summarized as follows:

The primary advantage of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method is that it is a fun way to learn the English language. When kids can actively participate in TPR activities, they get motivated and involved in learning English. It has been demonstrated that using the TPR method, which promotes

**Vol 7, No 2 (2024): ESTEEM**

oral expression and active participation through repeating and retelling, improves language skills in kindergarten pupils (Widiputera, 2004). Rokhayati (quoted in Nuraeni, 2019) lists the following benefits of incorporating TPR into English language learning activities: TPR can be used in both large and small classes; (a) it is entertaining and enjoyable for kids during the teaching and learning process; (b) it aids in students' memory of English words and expressions; (c) it can be applied in both situations; (d) it is appropriate for both adult and young learners; and (e) it is appropriate for active learners in the classroom.

The game approach is the next advantageous effect. The game method is an entertaining way to teach kids language. Huyen & Nga (quoted in Wulanjani, 2016) state that games have been shown to help kids learn more quickly and easily. Furthermore, games foster a relaxed and stress-free atmosphere that helps students retain the information they are learning. According to Paul (quoted in Qiu, 2016), kids frequently grow disinterested in conventional teaching methods in favour of play and struggle to stay focused and in control. As a result, it's critical to offer engaging and practical strategies—like spelling games—to hold their attention and improve their educational experience.

Singing to children has been shown to be an effective way to engage and capture them while teaching them English, making the process more pleasurable and exciting. According to Hidayat (in Miranti et al., 2015), songs that are appropriate for kindergarten-aged kids should include a few key elements, like instructional substance, brief, easily

memorised phrases, connection to the kids' interests, and a catchy, easy-to-understand melody. Children's growth and development are greatly aided by the combination of songs and movements. Children can communicate their ideas and feelings through music, which helps them feel balanced and develop emotionally (Ela, 2012). Singing along with the process of learning English might make it more fun. For young children who naturally gravitate towards singing and physical activity, teaching English through movement and song is a successful method (Widiputera, 2004). Children can therefore feel at ease when learning English through singing or song. The use of music in the classroom not only improves student engagement and helps our brains focus, but it also fosters a calm environment.

Increasing vocabulary is another way to teach English to young children. According to Marlianingsih (2016), children learn two kinds of vocabulary: age-appropriate general vocabulary and particular vocabulary. While fundamental vocabulary contains terminology for family members, bodily parts, pronouns, important numbers, essential verbs, basic adjectives, and common objects, children also learn words linked to colours, numbers, and time. French Allen highlights using relatable and familiar elements from the local environment as instructional tools (Purwaningsih, Sari, & Purwandari, 2017). Children are introduced to names of animals, family members, and body parts, for example. Using flashcards is one useful method in which teachers give students visual cards and have them participate in listening and demonstration exercises based on the pictures.



It turns out that learning English gives kids confidence, especially when they walk into the correct kind of setting, like foreign schools. Achmad Fadlan et al. list a number of advantages of learning English, such as expanding one's knowledge, making it easier to communicate with people, enhancing one's self-esteem when given the right support, assisting with environment adaption, and promoting social contacts. Once a youngster has mastered the language, they may converse with classmates and adults in an efficient manner and learn from their exchanges. Since early childhood education covers both native Indonesian and other languages like English, language and communication skills are crucial. In ordinary talks, Indonesians frequently employ foreign languages, such as English, for everything from basic greetings to formal phrases. From kindergarten through higher education, English is taught as a topic in formal education. In Indonesia, early childhood education has just begun to incorporate English language instruction as a foreign language (Sulistyo, 2009). Thus, how crucial is learning English for a child's growth, for both his day-to-day existence and for when he moves into a new setting where English is the primary language?

Numerous sources highlight the benefits of multilingual education. Morrison (2012) asserts that bilingualism has advantages for children's cognitive, cultural, and economic development in addition to fostering bilingualism. It has been discovered that bilingual people are more conscious and sensitive to language structures, which can carry over and generalise to early literacy and non-verbal development. Many research have

been done on the benefits of bilingualism, and the results have changed from being viewed from a negative to a more positive angle. In their study comparing French-speaking monolingual kids versus bilingual kids who spoke both languages, Nicolay (2013) found that bilingualism has several benefits, especially for cognitive skills. Thus, there is no harm in exposing young toddlers to the English language.

### **What is the negative effect from learning English for early childhood**

The negative effects of learning English in early childhood can be summarized as follows:

Not just a favourable effect but also a negative one. First, it turns out that teaching English is not as simple as we may think it is after trying a few different approaches. This is due in part to the child's innate intellect and other internal variables like his own drive. When adopting English learning, it is best to have the child's own desire and motivation rather than depending only on the parents' preferences. There is a substantial correlation between children's emotional development during the learning process and intrinsic motivation. The seven elements that affect learning a second language include intelligence, aptitude, personality, motivation and attitudes, preferences, learner beliefs, and age of acquisition, according to Lightbown and Spada (2000:52–61). Children's innate desire and readiness to learn English without outside influence or compulsion is referred to (Hu & Mcgeown, 2020; Jeong & Lee, 2014; Nakamura, 2019; Oakes, 2013). Children who genuinely want to learn English usually find the subjects and the methods of instruction enjoyable. Additionally,

**Vol 7, No 2 (2024): ESTEEM**

they become more interested and eager to explore other learning materials like English-language films and novels.

Early exposure to English language instruction is beneficial for a child's growth, but it's even better if the learning does not interfere with play, since young children need playtime to avoid feeling pressed for time. Not only does the use of English in early childhood education need the endorsement of certain experts, but the use of foreign languages is thought to burden young learners. There are varying views about teaching English to young children, according to Satrianingrum et al. (2021). Some contend that teaching English to young children while they are playing could burden them. On the other hand, advocates assert that by offering suitable methods and excitement, kids can acquire English language proficiency without sacrificing their playtime or overtaxing their developing minds (Huda et al., 2020).

**4. CONCLUSION**

The article leads one to the conclusion that early English instruction has more good benefits than negative ones. When it comes to learning English, young children are eager to learn the language if we use engaging media to capture their interest. Examples of engaging media include movies, images, games, flashcards, music, games, TPR (Total Physical Response), picture books, and other materials that make learning English fun and engaging.

**5. SUGGESTION**

In light of the adverse effects, a number of recommendations are

applicable. Early English learning can be applied if the child is dependent on the child's comprehension after the age of four. Parents and children must collaborate so that English language learning is not limited to English alone, but also includes other subjects. As parents, we must adapt to our children's living environment because, while our children may be able to communicate with parents in other languages, they will find it difficult to communicate with other children who are not proficient in English, which will make it harder for them to make friends. Another recommendation is to slow down because everything has a process when teaching English to young children. This will prevent the learning from being too challenging and quickly boring.

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**Vol 7, No 2 (2024): ESTEEM**

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**Vol 7, No 2 (2024): ESTEEM**

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