

STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING EARLY CHILDHOOD ENGLISH EDUCATION

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Abstract

Early childhood education basically aims to provide stimulation in all aspects of child development including physical, intellectual, social, emotional and language development to develop optimally. To provide a good education for early childhood we must understand their characteristics and needs according to the level of child development. So we have to provide activities that suit the needs of students and deliver them in the right way. In accordance with the world of early childhood, children learn through play (learning through play) and playing is a learning process for them (playing is learning). Therefore we have to give them activities in a way that fits their world: play.

Keywords: early childhood education, level of development, learning through play

INTRODUCTION

The era of globalization requires us to master English both orally and in writing. These demands make parents compete to send their children to schools with international or national standards plus where the language medium used is English. No matter the psychological ability of the child's language, the age of the child, the education of the educators and the method being taught, the important thing is that if there is an international license and speak English, the parents will be satisfied and believe in the education. As a result, many children are frustrated and stressed. Instead of mastering the English language they get, instead they become karbitan children who are forced to speak English. So that the pronunciation of sounds and the sentence structure of the language they speak is wrong and eccentric. Actually, there needs to be consideration for parents to include their children in English-based education. The age of the child is an important consideration in learning English (foreign language). At what age should a child acquire foreign language learning (English)? And what teaching methods and processes are appropriate and appropriate for early childhood? This issue is the author's consideration to discuss and describe it in the journal of this paper.

Foreign language education for children in America and Europe dates back to the fifties and became very popular in the sixties, but declined somewhat in the seventies. Education and learning English is based on the idea that learning a foreign language or a second language is better if it starts earlier (Hammerby, 1982: 265). Many assumptions about age and language learning include that children learn languages better than adult learners, foreign language learning in schools should start as early as possible, it is easier to attract children's attention and interest than adults as expressed by Ur (1996: 296).). This assumption has not been confirmed by research, although from experience it seems that children learn better and there is evidence that the older the child is, the more effective he is in learning the language (Ur; 1996).

DISCUSSION

1. English as International Language

English has become an international language used in almost all areas of global life. English has also become a world language that dominates the communication era to connect and transfer knowledge throughout the world. This gives the assumption that mastery of English is a very important requirement for today's modern society because mastery of English makes it easier for someone to expand their association in the international world. As Fromkin puts it, "English has been called 'the lingua franca of the world'" (1990: 259).

The position of English in Indonesia is the first foreign language. This position is different from the second language. Mustafa (2007) in this case states that a second language is a language that children learn after their mother tongue with the characteristics of that language being used in the surrounding community. Meanwhile, a foreign language is the language of another country that is not used in general in social interaction. The position of English in Indonesia has resulted in the rare use of English in social interactions in the community so that English is a difficult language to learn because English is a foreign language that is not used daily in people's lives in Indonesia.

In fact, mastery of English is a very important skill in today's information and communication era. It really determines how we can interact globally. The current issue of globalization demands quality human resources and is able to communicate in various foreign languages, especially English as an international language. These foreign language skills are needed to master science, have broad social relations and a good career. This makes everyone from all walks of life motivated to master English.

The public's tendency to master foreign languages makes them compete with each other to get their children to learn English as one of the skills to be developed. This is based on the assumption that children learn foreign languages faster than adults (Santrock, 2007:313). A study conducted by Johnson and Newport, 1991 (Santrock, 2007:313) showed that immigrants from China and Korea who began living in Americans aged 3 to 7 have better English skills than older children or adults. Other studies that state the benefits of mastering a foreign language are more

Early childhood, stated Mustafa (2007), that children who master a foreign language have advantages in terms of intellectual flexibility, academic skills, language and social. In addition, children will have the readiness to enter a social context with various languages and cultures. So that when they grow up, children will become quality human resources and can excel. Mustafa (2007) adds that children's understanding and appreciation of their own language and culture will also develop if children learn foreign languages from an early age. The reason is because they will have greater access to foreign languages and cultures.

However, teaching English in Indonesia is different from teaching English as a second language in countries where English is the medium of communication. In Indonesia, the position of English is the first foreign language that must be taught in junior and senior high schools, while in elementary school it is one of the local content subjects which is not (or) not yet a mandatory subject. Although at this time English has been tried to become a foreign language as a subject or later as a "medium" in bilingual education (Chamot, 1987). In fact, a bilingual learning program is currently being tried for mathematics and science subjects in 4th and 5th grade elementary schools (42 elementary schools in 30 provinces).

Actually, the purpose of teaching English includes all language competencies, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. English is also very different from the children's first language (Indonesian, Javanese, Sundanese, and other regional languages in Indonesia). This

linguistic difference is important to understand so that learning can be justified. These differences include: speech, spelling, language structure, stress and intonation, vocabulary, and cultural values of foreign languages. English is also known as a language that is careful with time (tenses), careful about numbers (singular-plural), and careful about people (feminine and masculine).

2. Early Childhood Language Cognitive Development

The development of a child's language has actually started since the child was born by using the simplest language or pre-speech, namely "crying", then development in the form of "chattering/chattering", simple words/sentences accompanied by body movements/conditions as speech complements. In educational psychology, it is known that there is a learning theory that can be used as the basis for teaching. The learning model that is quite well known is the intellectual/cognitive development approach that was coined by Jean Piaget (1896-1980). In Piaget's model (Dahar, 1988), each individual experiences the following levels of intellectual development:

1. Sensorimotoric stage (age 0-2 years).

At this stage, children begin to learn and control their environment through their five senses and movements. The baby's behavior at this stage is solely based on the stimulus it receives. Around the age of 8 months, babies have the knowledge of object permanence, i.e. even if an object is not visible in front of their eyes at some point, it does not mean that the object does not exist. Before the age of 8 months, babies generally think that things they don't see mean they don't exist. At this stage, the baby owns the world based on his observations on the basis of the movements / activities carried out by the people around him.

2. Preoperational stage (age 2-7 years).

Children try to master symbols (words) and are able to express their experiences, even though they are not logical (pre-logical). At this time the child is egocentric, namely seeing something from himself (perception centration), by seeing something from one characteristic, while other characteristics are ignored. At this stage the child is able to think before acting, even though his thinking ability has not yet reached the level of logical thinking ability. During 2-7 years, children's lives are also marked by an egocentric attitude, where they think subjectively and are unable to see the objectivity of other people's views, so they find it difficult to accept other people's views. Another characteristic of children whose cognitive development is in the preoperational stage is their inability to distinguish that the same two objects have a fixed mass, number or volume even though their shape is changing. Because they do not think abstractly yet, children at this age learn more easily if the teacher involves the use of concrete objects rather than using only words.

3. Concrete operational stage (age 7-11 years).

At this stage the child understands and thinking that is concrete yet abstract. In general, at this stage children already have the ability to understand the concept of conservation), that is, although an object changes its shape, its mass, quantity, or the volume is constant. Children are also able to make observations, judge and evaluate so that they are not as egocentric as before. The child's thinking ability at this stage is still in a concrete form have not been able to think

abstractly, so they are also only able solve concrete learning problems. Learning activities involving students in hands-on experience is very effective compared to teacher's explanation in verbal form (words).

4. Formal operational stage (11-15 years old and above).

At this stage the child is able to think abstractly. At this stage, students' abilities are already at the stage of abstract thinking. They are able to propose hypotheses, calculate possible consequences and test their hypotheses. If faced with a problem, students at the formal operational stage of development are able to formulate all possibilities and determine which possibilities are most likely to occur based on their analytical and logical thinking skills.

According to Piaget, children aged 2-7 years are in the preoperational stage, which is a stage that has the main characteristics of development using symbols/sign language and intuitive concepts. This stage is divided into two stages, the first stage is the pre-conceptual stage (2-4 years), where the representation of an object is expressed in language, pictures and imaginary games. Second, the intuitive stage (4-7 years). At this stage the representation of an object is based on the perception of one's own experience, not on reasoning. The term "operation" here is a logical thought process, and is a sensorimotor activity. In this stage children are very egocentric, they find it difficult to accept the opinions of others. Children believe that what they think and experience also becomes the thoughts and experiences of others. They believe that inanimate objects have animate properties. The characteristics of children at this stage are as follows:

- a) Children can relate the experiences in their play environment with their personal experiences, and therefore they become selfish. Children are not willing if their belongings are held by someone else.
- b) The child does not yet have the ability to solve problems that require "reversible" thinking. Their thoughts are still irreversible.
- c) The child has not been able to see two aspects of an object or situation at once, and unable to reason individually and deductively.
- d) Children reason transductively (from specific to specific). Children also have not been able to distinguish between fact and fantasy. Sometimes children like to lie. This happens because children have not been able to separate the actual events from their imaginations.
- e) Children do not have the concept of eternity (quantity, material, area, weight and content). f) Towards the end of this stage, children are able to give reasons for what they believe. Children can classify objects into groups that only have one particular trait and have begun to understand concrete concepts.

So, when young children learn English they are in the preoperational stage and therefore they need lots of illustrations, models, pictures, and other activities. It seems that Piaget does not believe that the use of direct learning is actually as important in the development of natural, logical, and mathematical knowledge (Wood, 2001). Currently, there are many studies that prove and are quite convincing that the actual benefits of verbal learning, social interaction, and culture can increase learning optimally. This is clear in the theory of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) developed by Vygotsky (1978; 1986). What is ZPD?

"ZPD is the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers"

If a child cannot understand something, then according to Piaget the child is not mentally ready. For Vygotsky, learning is outside the area of the development of knowledge. In this case, the lesson has a social value, for learning English this social interaction can be carried out in the form of pair or group assignments.

3. English Education for Early Childhood

The most sensitive period to language in a person's life is between age two to seven years, all kinds of aspects of language must be introduced to children before this sensitive period ends. In this sensitive period, it is very important to introduce good and correct ways of speaking, because this skill is very useful for communicating with the environment (Maria Montessori, 1991). Based on this theory, it is appropriate if English is introduced to children as early as possible. Given that English is the first foreign language in Indonesia, the learning process must be carried out in stages. The selection of material that is appropriate for the child's age and is also effective for the cognitive development of children's language as well as a pleasant learning situation must be a major concern in the success of a learning process. The success of the English learning process in early childhood is certainly influenced by many factors, including:

1. Qualified teachers, teachers who can live up to the learning process
2. Adequate and (adequate) learning resources and facilities.
3. The curriculum is good, simple, and attractive (attractive).

On the other hand, it is necessary to understand that early age is the age of play. Every child is a unique person and the world of play is a serious but exciting activity for them. So the right approach needs to be created by an educator so that the English learning process is more interesting and fun without leaving the correct language rules. The approach used should be in line with the purpose of language recognition in general. The goal is that children can understand how to speak properly and correctly, dare to express their ideas or opinions and can communicate with their environment. In learning English, there are many methods and techniques that can be used:

1 . Music

Music which is included:

- Singing (Singing)
- Chants and Rhymes (Short Songs and Poems), and so on.

The strategy and techniques to be used should be selected and adapted to the abilities to be achieved. The professionalism of an educator in developing and utilizing these methods and techniques is needed so that the teaching and learning process can run better. Teaching methods and processes in communicative contexts include the context of social, cultural situations, games, singing and music, story reading, art experiences, crafts and prioritizing physical movement are very appropriate and effective methods if used in the English learning process, especially for students. early childhood.

Furthermore, according to Matondang (2005: 134) music and motion are very successful methods if used in the process of learning English, especially for early childhood. Because in essence music (singing song) is the art of composing tones or sounds in sequences, combinations, and temporal relationships to produce compositions that have unity and continuity (contain rhythm). And a variety of rhythmic tones or sounds are also called songs. So music or songs are a unity that cannot be separated and can be used as a tool in a learning process. While

movement comes from the basic word motion, and 'movement' has a meaning, a change of place (activity) which is carried out after there is an impulse (inner/feeling). Movement activities can arise after a person listens to a song/singing.

Using music and movement as an approach in the English learning process and presenting it in an interesting and fun way in a process of teaching and learning activities, can help children to be happier and more active in learning and make it easier for children to understand a teaching material. and demonstrate a movement in accordance with the meaning of the song sung. So motion and song is an activity that is very fun for children. and can also be used as a motivator in the process of learning English in early childhood.

Music and movement play an important role in the development process of a child. Songs can enrich spiritual life and provide a balance in life for children. Through music, humans can express their thoughts and feelings and can control their emotional aspects. The singing is part of the music. Singing serves as a tool to express thoughts and feelings to communicate. In essence: songs for children are as:

1. Emotional language, where children can express their feelings by singing, feeling happy, funny, amazed, emotional.
2. Tone language, because singing can be heard, can be sung, and communicated.
3. Motion Language,

The movement in singing is reflected in the bars (regular beats), in rhythm (short, irregular movements/beats), and in the melody (high and low movements).

Thus singing is an activity that is very liked by children. In general, singing for children functions more as a play activity than a learning activity or message delivery. Singing can provide satisfaction, joy, and happiness for children so that it can encourage children to study harder (Joyful Learning). By singing a child will learn, master, and practice a teaching material that is delivered by the educator faster. In addition, children's ability to hear (listening), sing (singing), be creative (creative) can be trained through this activity.

Meanwhile, movement is body language. Children express their feelings through movement activities after listening to songs. Children have an active relationship in responding to singing. Through movement and thought. his body will be able to describe what the child feels and understands about the music (singing). Movement activity itself is needed for early childhood in training and developing their gross motor skills. So singing for children is not only voicing a song, but at the same time conveying the content and meaning of the song, as well as demonstrating the song with movements such as free movement or dance moves. For that, it would be nice if the teacher could use it well

Music and Movement in the implementation of teaching and learning activities. The songs that are good and suitable for children are, among others:

1. Singing that can help the growth and development of children (aspects physical, intelligence, emotional, social);
2. Singing that departs from the abilities that the child already has;
 - a. the content of the song according to the children's world;
 - b. the language used is simple;
 - c. the area of tone is commensurate with the ability of the vocal apparatus and pronunciation child; and
 - d. theme song, among others; refers to the curriculum used.

Although there are many source books and CDs/VCDs that can be used, the most important

factor is the ability of a teacher to choose, use and develop existing songs so that the songs can be presented and understood by children without forgetting the rules of good and correct English.

2. Movement

Movement which is include :

- Dance
- Role Play

Five year old children can make a symbolic gesture, they can express ideas, feelings, or emotion through motion, they can create a dance, a funny play, or a game to express feelings and experiences. regular motion of children and sway and jump spontaneously children accompanying the music evolve towards a movement that resembling a very complicated dance on three, four and five year olds. Motion is apparently a part of existence nature of children ages three, four, and five years. Three and four year olds run and throw his body to and fro in classrooms and gardens play; five year old looks jumping, prancing and in circles instead of walking normally. Start by following natural motion three, four, five year olds. Rather than telling them to move follow the music, the teacher should start by forming children's own natural movements (Seefeldt, 2008).

Research result found that by using song lyrics (singing) can improve children's speech (E. M. Sari, 2016). The advantages of the Motion and Song method Muliawan (2017) namely easy, cheap, simple and fun; knowledge or moral messages that delivered can stick in memory children for a long period of time; for certain types of songs can cultivate enthusiasm and passion for life, spirit of patriotism and passion for sacrifice the big one. Can be concluded that through the method of motion and songs children can learn while playing through activities concrete, not abstract. Activity learning English to be excited activity because fun learning, children can learn vocabulary speaking skills enthusiastically in English.

In order to develop students' communication skills, teachers need to create scenarios for dynamic, active and interesting language teaching. In learning speaking skills, students often encounter several problems. The problem that is often found is that their native language makes it difficult for them to use a foreign language. Another reason is the lack of motivation to practice a second language in everyday conversation. Many techniques can be applied including role play because many research findings say that this technique is effective to use in teaching speaking. Role play will determine the ideal activity in which students can use English creatively and aim to start a conversational situation in which students might find themselves and give them the opportunity to practice and develop their communication skills.

The steps that must be taken in implementing the role-play method are:

1. The teacher divides students into groups, each group can consist of four or six students.
2. Situations and problems are selected according to ability and interest.
3. The teacher distributes cards to each group, each individual in the group gets one card.
4. The teacher asks each group to discuss to determine 'who plays who'.
5. Each group makes its own dialogue according to the situation, problem, and role to be played.
6. The teacher asks each group to start playing the role in front of the class one by one.
7. The teacher determines the role of the listener.
8. Another group that has not yet appeared is listening and taking notes on the language errors used

CONCLUSION

Based on the description above, some conclusions can be formulated as follows. First, English is an international language that dominates the era of communication to connect and transfer knowledge throughout the world. Therefore, mastery of English is a very important skill in today's information and communication era. These foreign language skills are needed to master science, have broad associations and have a good career. This makes people from all walks of life motivated to learn English from an early age.

Second, English education would be ideal if it was started at an early age, especially before they turned 12 years old. Early childhood is a child in the age range of 27 years. This age range is a golden period for the development of children's language skills. They are capable of learning any language like native speakers and this period should be made the most of it

Third, according to Piaget, early childhood is a child who has preoperational cognitive development conditions, namely having a high egocentric, not understanding abstract things, only understanding symbols and still thinking pre-logically. whose center of development and learning occurs in a social context, they are still very dependent on adults who have been in contact with the child since birth. These adults play an important role and as mediators of the world to help the child learn to do things and learn to think.

Fourth, English education for early childhood requires appropriate and effective teaching methods and processes. There are several methods and techniques that are suitable for teaching English to early childhood, including in a communicative context including the context of social, cultural situations, games, singing and music, story reading, artistic experiences, crafts and prioritizing physical movement. And among these methods and techniques, the approach to songs and movements is a very appropriate and successful method in English language education for early childhood. Because basically children like to sing and do physical activities that are fun for them.

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