

TEACHERS' DIFFICULTIES IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO YOUNG LEARNERS IN 5 SCHOOLS AT NIAS

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Abstract

The use of English in education in Indonesia continues to increase, giving rise to English subjects in elementary schools or to young students. Teaching English to young learners is not easy because English is not their mother tongue. So teachers find it difficult to teach young students. Behind the problem, there must be a solution so that teachers who teach English to young learners have the best way to teach students. Therefore, the researcher conducted a study to describe the problems faced by teachers in teaching English to students. The purpose of this study was to find out the difficulties faced by English teachers when teaching young students and the researchers were motivated to conduct descriptive qualitative research on teachers' difficulties in teaching English to young students in 5 schools in Nias. Data were collected, analyzed and interpreted using the interview method. Five English teachers were selected from different schools as interview participants. The researcher used 2 weeks to conduct interviews with 5 teachers in different teaching locations. From some of the teachers' opinions, it can be concluded that there are many difficulties they face when teaching, namely lack of facilities, lack of knowledge in using IT, limited time, and lack of student motivation in learning. Methods and strategies to overcome difficulties in teaching English, namely by using games, increasing vocabulary, and English songs for children.

Keywords: *Teachers' difficulties, teaching English, young learners.*

Introduction

There are many types of language used to communicate. One of them is English. People all over the world should learn English as an international language. According to Mappiasse and Ahmad (2014:1), English has become a language the most spoken language in the world today. Therefore, the ability to use English is very important for everyone. As Lauder (2008: 3) points out, English is used to follow technological and scientific improvements and also for better services opportunity. This shows that English plays an important role in many ways in our lives, such as education, business, politics, etc. Therefore, both developed and developing countries need to understand that English is an important language for learning. Teaching English is an important issue in countries where English is spoken it is not their native language, so learning a second language is difficult for L2 learners because they can't speak English in real situations, because they should learn sentences from textbooks and not in the natural environment. Therefore, teachers should always look for practical strategies to reduce the difficulty of teaching English language, and they will face many challenges which raise questions about the best way to teach.

Teaching English plays an important role in standing and succeeding as a foreign language. Students often find only a small amount of English outside the classroom because English is not used to teach the language in the classroom or not as a communication tool during social interaction. This departure places a great deal of responsibility on English teachers to ensure that students learn English in positive environment and introduce successful language learning within school. Therefore, the language knowledge and teaching skills of the teachers, as well along with many other complex skills, necessary for teaching English as a foreign language. Linnan (2014) says that teaching and learning English in Indonesia, need skills especially in English, so that they can be part of the global economy and help the country to grow economically. He also says that difficulties include the distribution of teachers between different classes, the decline of English language teaching time and curriculum 2013, use of poor textbooks and which are less than the actual amount of English to spoken in the classroom.

Based on the researcher's experience during the observation called internship 1, the researcher identified several problems and difficulties. This is often done, especially by teachers in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. First, students do not understand what is given by the teacher. Second, students are not interested in learning English mostly they are not focused and play games to their classmates. Third, students are involved in their native language, therefore, it is difficult for them to express their thoughts because they speak less and students' pronunciation is still weak. Fourth, they find it difficult to translate or do not understand if the teacher uses English therefore the teacher takes a lot of time to translate the sentence.

Based on previous researches explaining the best information. There are 4 difficulties for teachers when teaching English to young students: First, students' socio-economic conditions have a positive correlation with their motivation to learn English. Second, the inclusion of English in the national curriculum for primary school students leads to a gap between policy and reality in Baureno village. Third, to limit the difficulties teachers face, strict policies should be implemented regarding who is allowed to teach English. Fourth, it is imperative that English teachers in this era be equipped with the ability to adapt to technological developments. Teachers in this era not only need to be equipped with teaching knowledge but also have skills in using advanced technology (Khulel Buyun,2021). There are five indicators of the challenges teachers face in the classroom, such as: 1) cognitive development, 2) motivation, 3) attention, 4) multi-level grouping, and 5) assessment. Most of the challenges teachers face are 1) students lack confidence, 2) students' pronunciation is not clear, 3) originate from parents or parent involvement (Putri and Nunung,2023). The challenges of teaching English in rural Madrasah Tsanawiyah in Bengkulu Tengah, Indonesia are students' skills, motivation, teaching resources, lack of professional training, and lack of parental support. proves to be a challenge for teachers (Zulhijjah,2022). Thus, from the various opinions of previous researchers, it can be concluded that teaching English to young learners still has many difficulties. Then, as a result of the differences in opinions, there are shortcomings to be researched.

According to Angraini (2018), teachers of English for children encounter certain problems in professional practice; it comes from the outside or from the inside. In general, the problems mainly come from the outside, such as student motivation, diversity, class size, etc. However, other problems come from within - from the teachers themselves - and some teachers are incompetent. In the case of Indonesia, the challenges are seen from three different perspectives: from the government, teachers and parents. Regarding this issue, some implications are aimed at certain parties, not only governments, teachers and parents, but also institutions or even students.

The purpose of this study is to find out the difficulties faced by English teachers when teaching young learners and researcher is motivated to do a descriptive qualitative research about teachers' difficulties in teaching English to young Learners in 5 school at Nias. To ensure the objectives, this research presents the question as follows:

1. Do you have a background in teaching English to young learners?
2. What are the difficulties for teachers in teaching and learning English to young learners?
3. What is the right solution to overcome these difficulties?

Method

In order to collect data, all aspects of English teaching and learning activities in primary schools on Nias, particularly in Gunungsitoli, are investigated. It is related to the aim of finding out the difficulties that occur in delivering material to young learners. Specifically, this research is classified as qualitative research. Qualitative research is research based on inductive reasoning patterns based on objective, participatory observation of social phenomena. Problematic social phenomena include the past, present, and even the future. Related to social

sciences, economics, culture, law, history, humanities, and other social science subjects, Suyitno in Islamuddin et al. (2023).

According to Walidin et al in Fadli (2021), state qualitative research refers to a type of research method, procedure for comprehending the human or societal aspects phenomena through the development of a comprehensive and intricate image that may be expressed verbally, providing comprehensive information perspectives acquired from informants, and conducted in authentic environments. One kind of social action that emphasizes how people interpret and make sense of their experiences in order to understand the social reality they live in is qualitative research.

Data collection techniques are commonly used in qualitative research. Commonly used in qualitative research, including observation, interviews, and documents. In the following, the research tools will be explained in detail. Observation is one of the data collection techniques in qualitative research. As one of the data collection techniques in qualitative research, observation is the foundation of all sciences. A questionnaire is a tool used to collect data that contains pre-written questions for respondents to answer. Documentation in qualitative research can be understood as one of the data collection methods including examining, reviewing, and analyzing documents and factors. related to them, either by the subject himself or by others. done by that subject or by someone else about that subject.

Data analysis techniques, according to (Miles et. al., in Islamuddin et.al., 2023) are divided into three streams of activities occurring simultaneously. The three streams are: data condensation, data display, and drawing and verifying conclusions. Data Condensation refers to the process of selecting, concentrating, simplifying, abstracting, and/or transforming data that appears in Complete written field notes and interview transcripts. , documents and other empirical factors. By condensation, it makes the data more robust. Data condensation is a form of analysis that refines, sorts, focuses, eliminates, and organizes data in such a way that a "final" conclusion can be drawn and verified. Data Display In general, a display is an organized collection of information arranged to allow conclusions to be drawn and action to be taken. Seeing visible data helps us understand what's going on and take action on it, whether that's deeper analysis or taking action based on that understanding. Good data visualization is the primary path to solid qualitative analysis.

Drawing and verifying conclusions is the essence of research results describing final opinions based on previous descriptions or decisions obtained on the basis of inductive or deductive thinking methods. The conclusions drawn must be consistent with the research purpose, research objectives, and the research results that have been interpreted and discussed. Remember that research results are not a summary of a research abstract.

Because this research requires information from teachers who teach English in elementary schools, the research instrument is an interview. Interviews are a type of spoken interaction wherein information is sought or gathered, resembling a conversation. They serve as a data gathering method wherein the researcher and the subject being investigated engage in a process of questioning and responding Abdusama et al in Lase 2023. Using structured interviews, the interviews lasted for 20 to 30 minutes and were conducted in Indonesian language as the researcher is a native speaker of the language. Five English teachers were selected from different schools as participants for the interviews. The voice recording method was used to record the teachers' answers so as to get the teachers' perspectives. Researchers used 2 weeks to conduct interviews with 5 teachers in different teaching locations.

Findings and Discussions

Findings

Interview with English Teachers

It is clear from this interview with teachers what teachers really are difficulty in teaching and learning English to young learners. The following questions:

1. Do you have a background in teaching English to young learners?

T1 : "I am not a graduate of elementary school teacher education but English education and during my lectures I have studied English for young learners courses."

T2 : "I have a background in teaching English to young learners because I have studied the English for young learners course."

T3 : "I have studied English for young learners in college, I think it can be my guide in teaching English to young learners."

T4 : "I have a background to teaching English for young learners because i have studied English for young learners course in my campus."

T5 : "I am not a graduate of elementary school teacher education but English education and during my lectures I have studied English for young learners courses, and I think it is some key to teach young learners."

Based on the results of information from 5 teachers, it can be concluded that they are not graduates of elementary school teacher education but graduates of English education and have studied English for young learners courses so that they are equipped to teach young learners.

2. What are the difficulties for teachers in teaching and learning English to young learners?

T1 : Difficulties for teachers such as lack of information and technology and lack of adequate facility such as speakers. Teacher difficulties for students such as, in grades 1, 2 and 3 they did not study English subject but in grades 4, 5 and 6 they did. So, at the time of grade 4 they lacked understanding because they had never studied it before. But when the independent curriculum came into effect, grades 1 to 6 studied English subjects.

T2 : The difficulty for teachers when teaching English subjects is the lack of facilities that support teaching and learning activities such as projectors and learning media. Likewise, when students find it difficult to translate words, write words, and remember vocabulary and its meaning because in English there are different ways of reading and writing, this makes it difficult for teachers to teach.

T3 : Difficulties for teachers are lack of facilities, limited time, students who are less responsive during the teaching and learning process. The achievement of the desired learning does not only come from the teacher but also the students' response or the feedback they give so that the teacher feels that it is not in vain in teaching. Young learners also really need motivation so as to encourage them to be more enthusiastic in learning, therefore the teacher must be able to motivate young learners to learn more actively, especially in English subjects.

T4 : The difficulty for teachers in teaching English to young learners is the lack of facilities such as dictionaries. Many students cannot find vocabulary because they do not have a dictionary. Parents cannot afford to buy one. So if there is an assignment given then the teacher has to translate it first.

T5 : The difficulties for teachers in teaching English to young learners are the lack of facilities such as language laboratories and lack of confidence.

In conclusion, the challenges faced by teachers in teaching English to young learners are multifaceted, encompassing issues such as mastering the use of information and technology, limited time, and lack of facilities. Teachers also struggle when students come from gaps in previous education, language barriers, and scarcity of learning tools, emphasizing the need for improved support systems, motivation, and resources to enhance the teaching and learning experience.

3. What is the right solution to overcome these difficulties?

T1 : The right solution to overcome this is to use several strategies and methods that are appropriate and related to the subject matter. As for grades 1 2 and 3, it refers more to vocabulary while grades 4 5 and 6 are more into games such as using flashcards.

T2 : To overcome these difficulties, we can convey the material using songs so that it can increase their vocabulary and is easily remembered by students.

T3 : To overcome this difficulty, they can practice with their other friends at least discussing daily life and can also use books containing vocabulary related to their lives, names of animals, objects, colors, food and drinks.

T4 : Because they are still children, they are more interested in learning using songs and games.

T5 : To overcome these difficulties, it seems that games can be used in learning and vocabulary must also be improved.

From several teachers' opinions, it can be concluded that there are many methods and strategies to overcome difficulties in teaching young learners, namely by using games, adding vocabulary, and English songs for children. This makes it easier for teachers to teach them if they are already equipped.

Discussions

Interpretation of research based on data analysis aims to confirm and strengthen the results. Based on the above findings, the researcher concluded that teaching English to young children is not easy, teachers in many schools have difficulty teaching English to young students. Husna, (2021), describe a good English teacher as someone who is good and successful characteristics of English teaching-learning process. Good English teachers who have a deep understanding of teaching and imparting knowledge to students and good characteristics in the teaching and learning process so the teaching learning process will be run well.

The teacher's background is important in teaching English to young learners, such as having studied the English for young learners course. Khan in Lestari 2021 explains that there are several challenges in teaching English and learning English as a foreign language in an Islamic environment, one of which is the background of the English teacher, teachers are the most important element in an education program. Teachers have a great responsibility in delivering subjects to students. To better understand language teacher training, it is important to take a closer look at the knowledge base of English foreign language teachers, their initial training and their continuing education.

There are many difficulties experienced by teachers in teaching English to young learners, the first is the lack of facilities. As Abrar in Pratiwi et al 2021 state, it is revealed that one of the problems faced by teachers is lack of facilities. Teachers need facilities such as language labs and speakers to support teaching and learning activities. However, if this is not facilitated by the school, teachers should be as creative as possible to prepare alternative options to find a solution. In addition, studying only using books makes students bored and neglect their studies. However, when teachers use media such as projectors to show videos, students will become more interested and attentive to the material the teacher presents, especially low-level students.

Second is lack of using information and technology, Conley (2010) said that “teachers often struggle with an inadequate knowledge of specific technology, technology-supported pedagogy, and technology-related-classroom management.” According to Songbatumis (2017), the challenges faced in teaching English such as different foreign languages and related to students, teachers and school supplies. One of that is lack of IT knowledge, teachers often feel a lack of specific technical knowledge, technical assistance courses and technical related activities classroom management.

Third is limited time in teaching learning process, Bayuaji in Lestari (2021) found that teachers face problems divided into two categories, linguistic problems and non-linguistic problems. Different pronunciations between English and Indonesian have become a linguistic issue. As a non-linguistic issue, the main problems are classroom management, limited teaching time, students' motivation to learn English and lack of ELT facilities.

The last are the lack of vocabulary, motivation and support from parents makes students less focused and less able to follow the material from the teacher. This can also cause the

learning objectives not to be achieved, making it difficult for teachers to teach young learners. Utomo et al., (2020), Challenges of Teaching English and the EFL classroom coming from teachers, students, schools and parents. Few teaching materials, school management, ICT skills, many teaching management, workload and lack of memory are the challenges of teaching English. On the student's side, difficulties in learning English include lack of vocabulary, motivational disorders and delinquency in children. Then there is no school equipment for supporting teaching and learning is also about the teaching and learning process. In addition, many parents have low education and vision of the future, which has an impact on the education of their children.

To overcome these difficulties, the interviewed teachers offered solutions to overcome children's difficulties in learning English by using different methods and strategies such as games, songs and remember vocabulary. Games help young learners perceive and understand lessons, as Pinter in Oktavia et al., (2022) suggests that young students learn through play. They also generally said that they use certain games in their teaching to make young students have fun in class. Garton, Copland, and Burn (2011) found that many teachers use songs to engage young students in learning. And the last strategy is memorizing vocabulary. Garton, Coplan, and Burn (2011) also found that memorization is one of the traditional ways to enrich young learners' vocabulary.

Conclusion

Based on the interview, it can be concluded that teaching English to young learners is very difficult and challenging. The difficulties include 1) Lack of facilities; 2) Lack of using information and technology; 3) Limited time; 4) Lack of vocabulary, motivation and support from parents makes students less focused and less able to follow the material from the teacher. In the learning process the teacher also uses Indonesian and translates into Indonesian when she uses English, because young learners have not been equipped with anything related to English, like when they are 5 years old they do not know English vocabulary, so the teacher has difficulty teaching English to young learners. When they enter primary school, English is something new to them, so teachers have difficulty teaching English to young learners. However, teachers have various ways that can make it easier and fun for them, such as ice breaking, games, songs, and vocabulary related to English. This way students can easily understand and remember the vocabulary.

However, as this study focuses on teachers' challenges in teaching English to young learners, which only focuses on the difficulties, the scope of this study is limited. The researcher recommends to future researchers that examining students' responses to learning is important. So that teachers do not feel difficult and feel that the learning objectives are achieved.

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