

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO CHILDREN AT EA GUIDENCES LEARNING

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Abstract

Learning English for children is an interesting and challenging task because children's language skills develop rapidly during the golden age, making it easier for parents and educators to teach children English. Learning strategies that allow students to actively participate in the learning process are considered to support constructivism. Because English is the first foreign language in Indonesia, the learning process will be carried out in stages. This research uses qualitative research and a phenomenological approach. The research subjects were class teachers and children. The research results show that teachers choose interesting strategies when learning in the classroom. The strategies used are very interesting, namely learning through games, learning using a visual approach, reading English books, encouraging children to speak English, and cheerful English music and songs.

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INTRODUCTION

English is one of the most important languages in today's global world. English language skills can provide many benefits in a person's daily life and career. Therefore, it is very important to start learning English from childhood. Learning English for children is an interesting and challenging task because children's language skills develop rapidly during the golden age, making it easier for parents and educators to teach children English. Montessori argued that the most language-sensitive period in a person's life is between the ages of two and seven. Before this sensitive period ends, children need to understand all aspects of language (Na'imah: 2022). The importance of acquiring appropriate and correct language during this sensitive period. The skills given to children at this time in the learning process are very useful so that children can easily communicate with the surrounding environment. Learning strategies are approaches or methods used by educators to design effective learning experiences for students. These strategies include a variety of techniques and approaches designed to teach specific concepts, skills, or

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values to students. The aim of the learning strategy is to create a learning environment that stimulates, supports and improves students' understanding and mastery of the subject matter. Learning strategies in teaching English to children are one of the supporting factors in the success of learning English. According to Piaget (2022) children build their knowledge through interaction with their environment. Learning strategies that allow students to actively participate in the learning process are considered to support constructivism. Because English is the first foreign language in Indonesia, the learning process will be carried out in stages. Preschool children can acquire English through teachers who start by teaching English vocabulary first and can teach vocabulary that children often encounter in their environment, such as names of animals, colors and media they usually encounter.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Child Language Development

Early childhood refers to the early period in human development, specifically from birth to around the age of eight. This is a critical phase in the formation of cognitive, language, social, emotional, and physical skills. Early childhood education focuses on child development in several aspects. From an early age, children go through a golden age, namely a period when children begin to be sensitive and sensitive in receiving various different stimuli. Each child's sensitive period is different, as is their respective level of growth and development. Language ability plays an important role in a child's development, but other developments are no less important. Language in early childhood refers to a child's ability to use and understand language, both spoken and written, during their early developmental period. Language involves various aspects, including the ability to listen, understand meaning, pronounce words, and communicate with other people. According to Nurbiana & Lara (2021) language is acquired and learned naturally so that children can meet the needs of their environment. Language has the ability to change and control behavior not only in children but also in other people. As a social tool, language is a way to respond to other people. Language is a communication tool for children that has many functions in everyday life.

English for Children

Introducing English to children from an early age has a different perspective because according to Penfield, in the theory of brain mechanisms, early age is the right phase for stimulation of languages other than the child's mother tongue or first language (Dewi, 2020). So it is best to introduce English from an early age, especially in early childhood education institutions. This is based on the assumption that children learn foreign languages faster than

adults (Santrock, 2007). Teaching English to children can be a fun and rewarding experience. By providing English language lessons to children, we give them an edge in facing the challenges of the global world and open the door to wider opportunities in education and careers in the future.

Teaching English to children has many significant benefits for children's development. The importance of learning English in early childhood includes: (1) developing language skills, children who are taught English from an early age tend to develop language skills better. Skills that can be seen are understanding vocabulary, grammar and speaking skills; (2) Increasing cognitive abilities, learning English can stimulate children's cognitive development, including thinking abilities, problem solving and creativity; (3) Preparation for the future, children who master English have an advantage in global competition in the future; (4) access to educational resources, many high-quality educational resources, books and learning materials are available in English. Children who master this language have wider access to knowledge and information; (5) development of listening and understanding skills, learning English helps children develop the ability to listen and understand instructions, stories and conversations. These are basic skills that are essential in the learning process; (6) Increased Academic Achievement, children who master more than one language tend to have more flexible thinking abilities, and this can support their academic achievement. According to Tyaningsih (2016) English is very important and in learning English it will be more effective if teachers use language media to support teaching and learning activities because children like visual things, the use of learning media can make the presentation of material more interesting and interesting. Learning English can open children's understanding of other people's cultures and customs. This can form an attitude of tolerance, appreciation for diversity, and openness to different world views. Teaching English at an early age can help children develop basic skills that facilitate learning another language later in life. Introducing English to young children, a teacher must understand their characteristics and stages of development.

Effective Strategies in Early Children's English Learning

Strategy is a very influential component in the world of education, one of which is the learning process in early childhood. Learning strategies for children are an effort to apply the values taught in each material so that students can learn, understand and apply them in everyday life. Because strategy is very important in learning activities to achieve the goals achieved. According to Diamarah & Zain (2014) strategy has the meaning of an outline of direction for action in an effort to achieve predetermined goals. Effective learning strategies must be flexible, responsive to student needs, and support

meaningful learning experiences. Educators need to continue to adapt and look for new ways to improve the learning experience for students.

According to Devinta (2018) language learning for early childhood is divided into 3 stages, namely for the age range 4 – 6 years, 7 – 9 years, and 10 – 12 years. In other words, this stage refers to the PAUD or preschool level, elementary school level grades 1 – 3 and grade 4. It is important for teachers to provide children with an understanding of using English in introducing the language in order to stimulate early childhood language skills (Aisya, et al 2020). The initial introduction in learning English to children is carried out in concrete ways so that children can understand the delivery of the material given by interpreting it in Indonesian (Afnida & Suparno, 2020). Choosing an effective strategy in learning English greatly influences a child's ability to accept a language that is rarely heard. Teachers also need to choose interesting teaching strategies to make it easier for children to receive the teaching materials provided (Candra, 2018).

A creative teacher will have an impact on the progress of learning and provide stimulation to children by teaching English little by little to young children during class, and assisted with media and educational game tools to support English learning (Tiolina Siregar & Tarigan, 2021). As for how to optimize children's language skills in the right way, otherwise it will have an impact on children not learning optimally by absorbing knowledge from teachers, and teachers will influence whether children are able to understand or not (Umi et al., 2020).

Teaching English to children is an interesting and challenging task. With the right approach, the English learning process can be more enjoyable and efficient. Effective strategies in learning English that can be given to children include: (1) learning through games, using games and play activities to teach vocabulary and grammar including puzzles, word bingo, and so on; (2) a visual approach including using pictures, word cards, and other visuals to help children understand English concepts with concrete objects or situations; (3) reading books in English, reading story books in English regularly can enrich children's vocabulary; (4) speaking activities, encouraging children to speak English as much as possible; (5) English music and songs, using cheerful and easy-to-remember English songs to introduce children to new melodies and vocabulary. Teaching English to children is not just about conveying information, but also about creating an engaging and positive learning experience. By using effective strategies such as games, visuals, reading, speaking, music, and consistency, children can quickly develop their

English skills in a fun and interactive way. Providing the right support and stimulus, children can master English better over time.

METHODS

This research uses qualitative research, namely a scientific research method that aims to understand social phenomena or symptoms in depth using a phenomenological approach. The reason for using a phenomenological approach in this research is that the researcher is looking to explore and explain how effective strategies are in teaching English to children at EA Guides Learning. The research subjects in this study were teachers and early childhood children, where the research location was at EA Tutoring North Pontianak. Data collection techniques, researchers used observation techniques to see the effective strategies used by teachers when teaching English to children, as well as observing the extent to which children were enthusiastic about the English learning strategies used by teachers when teaching. Then the technique used was interviews with research subjects, namely teachers, regarding the effective strategies teachers use when teaching children in the classroom. The data analysis used by researchers is collecting data related to the strategies used by teachers when teaching English to children, then reducing the data to choose objective data to answer the problems of existing phenomena. Then presents data from observations and interviews regarding effective strategies in teaching English as well as drawing conclusions from everything in EA Tutoring.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Effective Strategies in Children's English Learning

From the results of research conducted by researchers regarding effective strategies for learning English at EA Tutoring, it shows that The strategies used by teachers are effective in the English language learning process in the classroom. The results of observations and interviews on effective strategies for learning English by teachers in the classroom show that the teachers have implemented the strategies very well.

Table 1. Results of the study

No	Indicator	Yes	No
1	Learning through play	✓	
2	Visual approaches include using pictures, word cards, and other visuals	✓	
3	Read books in English	✓	
4	Encourage children to speak English	✓	
5	Cheerful English music and songs	✓	

Teachers use strategies by giving children a game both at the beginning of the lesson and at the end of the lesson. The first game strategy given to children is that the teacher invites them to do animal themed puzzles using English, inviting children to play roles using English to improve the quality of English learning in the classroom. The teacher also invites children to play chain whispering using English to practice their ability to hear English words. Furthermore, teachers also use a visual approach, including using pictures, word cards and other visuals. This visual approach is the basic thing used by EA Tutoring teachers so that children can easily understand the material presented by looking at objects directly because children learn from something concrete and children become more interested and feel challenged when learning English if what the teacher uses are objects that concrete.

The results of the third indicator are that teachers also invite children to read story books in English. This has proven that children are more fluent in reading stories told by their teachers and children are enthusiastic, especially when reading story books. The goal is that the teacher wants to introduce the vocabulary in the storybook. The fourth indicator is that teachers encourage children to speak English. Such as getting used to saying "Good Morning" when entering school, saying the words please and thank you using English. In the teacher's class, the fifth indicator is that the teacher always invites children to sing in English. The teacher will sing two songs from each material that will be taught. Singing activities are also an effective strategy that is carried out when children in their golden age are easy to learn and imitate the material presented by the teacher. The use of English through singing so that children enjoy it more and feel enthusiastic.

Of the five research indicators, the main thing that teachers do is create a classroom atmosphere that is supportive and inspiring. Teachers create connections with children so that children feel comfortable when communicating and learning English. The strategies given by EA Tutoring teachers to each child are different according to level of need and understanding, so that giving English language assignments also varies according to the child's ability level. Learning strategies for children need to pay attention to elements of fun, interactivity and active involvement. Teachers must also understand the level of development of each child and create an environment that supports learning English naturally and happily. From the results of observations and interviews with teachers, giving gifts in the form of praise is very important as a form of teacher appreciation for children who have the motivation to learn English. Teacher strategies in

learning English for children include a holistic approach that reflects the diversity and uniqueness of each class. Through the integration of technology, collaborative projects, and responsiveness to student needs, teachers create an environment that facilitates effective and positive English learning for children.

Teachers use visual materials such as posters, pictures and short videos to strengthen children's understanding of vocabulary and language structures. Visual material helps stimulate imagination and makes it easier to understand language concepts. Teachers try to integrate learning material with children's interests and hobbies. For example, teaching vocabulary related to themes or activities that children are interested in can make learning more relevant and interesting. Teachers include cultural elements in English learning by introducing foods, traditions and customs of different cultures. This not only supports language comprehension, but also opens children's minds to the diversity of the world.

Observations made by researchers on children showed that the children felt happy and enthusiastic during the process of learning English in the classroom. You can see children who always answer the teacher's questions, then are enthusiastic when the teacher teaches English by playing puzzles and using flashcards. Children confidently answer each riddle question with English delivery. It can be seen that in class the children memorize all the English songs that they sing with the teacher and understand the meaning of the songs. Children also feel enthusiastic when the teacher invites children to tell stories. It seems that the children are focused on listening and occasionally ask the meaning of the story told by the teacher.

CONCLUSION

Effective teaching strategies not only focus on transferring English knowledge, but also creating a positive and enjoyable learning experience. Teachers understand the importance of active involvement, fun, and play contexts in forming the basis of language learning for children. Overall, English teaching strategies for children cover a wide range of aspects, from creativity and parental involvement to personal appreciation and differentiation. Teachers play a central role in creating a learning environment that supports, challenges, and motivates children to achieve success in their English learning. By utilizing these strategies, teachers create holistic and engaging English learning experiences for children. These strategies are designed to support language development, communication skills, and

cultural understanding, creating a solid foundation for children's English language acquisition.

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