



Teachers' Techniques in Teaching English to Young Learners at TK Bambini School of Makassar

St. Hartina¹, Kisman Salija², Fatimah Hidayahni Amin²

¹Institut Agama Islam Negeri Palopo, Indonesia

²Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia

Abstract: *The objectives of this research were to find out the teachers' techniques in teaching, the problems in teaching and the best teaching techniques used by the teacher in teaching English to young learners at TK Bambini School of Makassar. It applied descriptive qualitative research. The subjects of the research were three kindergarten teachers of TK Bambini School of Makassar. The data were obtained through interview and observation. The data were analyzed based on procedure of data analysis that consisted of the data collection, the data reduction, the data display, and conclusion: drawing/verification. The findings showed that (1) the teachers' techniques in teaching English to young learners were singing a song, games, presentation practice and production, drilling, demonstration, story-telling, reading aloud, and dictation, (2) the teachers' problems in applying the certain teaching techniques were learners' lack of self-confidence, learners' uncontrollable movement when singing and playing the games, learners' misunderstanding towards the games rules and the story, learners' less focus on teachers' presentation and instructions, learners' unfamiliarity of the spelling words, learners' inability to read and write the word or sentences, and the teachers' difficulty in explaining the lesson and in performing science experiment, (3) the best teaching techniques implemented by the teachers were playing games, demonstration and presentation practice and production.*

Keywords: *Teachers' techniques, teaching English, young learners*

INTRODUCTION

As a part of curriculum, Ministerial Decree No.22 Year 2006, dated May 23rd 2006 states that English is taught from elementary students as a local subject moreover from kindergarten. Phillips (2002) argued that young learners are the more holistic learner; respond to the language according to what it does and what they can do with it rather than treating it as an intellectual game or abstract system. Setiaryni (2011) stated that the young learners are not lack of reading and writing skill but also have different characteristics in terms of their cognitive level, interests, needs, and environment. We can help the young learners learn effectively when the activities are meaningful, purposeful and enjoyable to them.

The observation result when the researcher asked five of the kindergarten teachers in Makassar stated that they found many difficulties in choosing and applying the appropriate teaching techniques for young learners.

Based on the researcher's observation besides teaching in TK Bambini School of Makassar, it was shown that the process of English learning in that school is interactive, communicative and applicable. The school not only uses English as a language of communication during the learning process but also the teaching techniques are very attractive and are conducted to engage students one another to interact in English during the school hours. Therefore, these situations attracted the researchers to investigate the teachers' techniques in teaching English to young learners at TK Bambini School of Makassar.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of young learner

Philips (2002) revealed that young learners are the children from the first year of formal school (five or six years old) to eleven or twelve years of age. Scott (2009) points out young learners are divided into level one (5-7 years old) and level two (8-9 years old). Based on the level of class, Ytreberg (1993) divided young learners into two groups: lower class (students are in the 1, 2 and 3 grade), and upper class (students are in the 4, 5 and 6 grade). Based on the explanation above, it is concluded that kindergarten students are categorized at level one (5-7 years old).

The characteristic of young learner

Scott & Ytreberg (1993:2-4) noted the characteristics of young learners as the active learners, learn through sensory and five senses, respond the language well through concrete things (visual things) rather than abstract things, interested in physical movements and real activities to stimulate their thinking. They will be enthusiastic if they are taught using fun activities or being involved in activities, love to play, and learn best when they are enjoying themselves;

Teaching approaches for young learner

Phillips (1999) argued that the young learners are the holistic learner. They respond the language according to what it does and what they can do with it rather than treating it as the intellectual game or abstract system. The main purposes are placing the children's perspective on the practical activities and meaningful aims. Most activities for the young learners have to involve the physical movement and their senses. The teacher needs to prepare a lot of visuals, pictures, objects and realia. Playfulness and meaningful should be the key word when describing the teacher's approach. Playing with the language is a natural way of language learning for young learners. Since the children's concentration and attention spans are short, especially at the early stages of language learning, the teachers have to created variety of activities, a variety of classroom organization, a variety of space, and of course a variety of techniques and methods.

Teaching techniques for young learner

Teaching technique is the implementation of teaching method in the level of procedure which is take place in the classroom. To some extent, different methods may have similar techniques even though they must have different techniques.

Based on the various teaching techniques above, teachers can combine more than one teaching techniques in the class. It needs to observe the learners' needs, the goal of material and the classroom situation before applying it. From this principle the teacher may develop his or her own techniques, such as introducing songs and games to make their learning fun and natural.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research applied a descriptive qualitative method which was aimed to collect and describe the data. The subjects of this research were three kindergarten teachers of TK B Bambini School Makassar which taught in three different level classes. The subjects were chosen purposively because of their availability and readiness to administer the research. The research was conducted in three classes: kindergarten A1, A2, and B. The research was conducted within three meetings per each teacher's class. In collecting data, an observation sheet and interview questions were employed.

All collected and processed data was analyzed descriptively and qualitatively. Then, the data were concluded by applying an inductive method. The technique of data analysis in this research followed the concept of Miles and Huberman who stated that the activity in analyzing the qualitative data analysis consists of three plots of activity. They are: data reduction, data display and verification. After the data was classified into part of the research variable, conclusion was conceived into the results of research. The data display was classified and reported by describing data which found in the field.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There were eight teaching techniques used by the teachers in classroom interaction as the results of observation and interview as presented in the following table:

Table 1. *Teachers' techniques in teaching English to young learners*

No	Teaching Techniques	Indicator	Teacher
1	Singing a song	The teachers construct the material through songs.	Teacher A Teacher B Teacher C
2	Games Board games Guessing pictures Guessing word Grouping block Team games	Teachers design the learning process through various games	Teacher A Teacher B Teacher C
3.	PPP (Presentation, Practice, Production)	The teacher presents the target language and learners practice the new language items	Teacher A Teacher B Teacher C
4.	Drilling Repetition Spelling word	The teacher emphasizes the lesson material through repetition or memorization of specific skills	Teacher A Teacher B

5.	Demonstration	The teacher involves the learners to 'learn by doing'	Teacher A Teacher B
6.	Story telling	The teacher tells the stories as the resource of knowledge	Teacher A Teacher C
7.	Reading aloud	The learners verbalize their thought as they read to practice pronunciation	Teacher A Teacher B
8.	Dictation	The teacher mentions the words and the learners write it down	Teacher A Teacher B Teacher C

The problems faced by the teachers in applying the certain teaching techniques were obtained from observation and interviews as the following table:

Table 2. *Problems in implementing the teaching techniques*

Teaching techniques	Teaching problems
Singing a song	Learners lacked of self confidence Learners shouted and moved too much when singing
Playing games	Learners lost controlled when playing the games Learners misunderstood about the games rules
Presentation, Practice and Production (PPP)	Learners were less focused on teachers' presentation Teachers were difficult to explain the lesson material
Drilling Spelling words	Learners did not know in spelling the words
Demonstration	Teachers failed in their science experiment (science class) Learners got difficulties in understanding the teacher explanation (science class) Learners got difficulties in practicing the teacher instructions (made art and craft)
Story telling	Learners did not understand the story
Reading aloud	Learners did not know to read the word or sentences
Dictation	Learners did not know to write the word or sentences

The best teaching techniques implemented by the teachers are Singing songs, Demonstration, and Presentation, practice and production (PPP).

The teaching techniques used by the teachers in teaching English to young learners at TK Bambini School of Makassar

Singing songs

During the classroom observation, the three teachers used songs for warming up and attracting the students' attention in the opening class. They sang the songs in the circle time for 10 to 15 minutes. The songs were chosen based on the learning purposes. Based on the observation and interview result, the researcher believed that using songs in teaching process is an effective technique for teaching English to young learners. A song can be developed into many activities in the learning process. Using songs could help the teachers to transfer words from songs into use, and maximize the potential of songs as teaching and learning tools.

Playing games

There were five games implemented by the three teachers. Teacher A implemented “guessing word and team game” while teacher B used “guessing number and grouping block” and teacher C applied “board games and guessing picture”. Teacher A employed the “Guessing word” to teach the learners about vocabulary and team games to teach about number, teacher B employed “grouping block” to introduce the learners about comparing size in this case “shorter and longer” and also grouping objects based on the color and teacher C implemented “Board games” to teach about number and guessing pictures” to enrich the learners’ vocabulary. Based on the observation and interview result above, it is concluded that using games in learning process was fun, entertaining and motivating for young learners. The games helped young learners to improve their memory and concentration skills.

Presentation Practice and Production (PPP)

In the observation, the three teachers used PPP in explaining the subject matter. The teacher presents the target language and learners practice the new language items. They used the technique to explain the different lesson.

Teacher A and C applied the technique to explain Phonics subject. According to teacher A, it was intended to teach learners the basic English language phonics rule, so that they can easily decode words to developed the learners’ reading skill; whereas, teacher B applied PPP technique in teaching Language. According to teacher B, language was the subject for teaching grammar. Based on the findings, it is inferred that PPP was suitable to promote the acquisition of knowledge or skill for young learners. It is the main techniques used by the teacher in explaining the main material to the student.

Drilling

Based on observation result, the teacher emphasizes the lesson material through repetition or memorization of specific skills. They promote the acquisition of knowledge or skill through repetitive practice. Teacher B used a drilling technique to emphasize the Phonics word list. She used the flash card as the teaching tool for spelling the words. Teacher A and c used repetition to drill the lesson. The previous material was reviewed and then learners simply have to repeat words, phrases or other materials after the teacher. Based on the observation result, it is inferred that repetition is a commonly used method of drilling. Learners simply have to repeat words, phrases or other materials after the teacher. This is a good method because it means that learners are given excellent model pronunciation immediately before they are asked to respond.

Demonstration

A demonstration is a valuable alternative to getting learners to ‘learn by doing’. Three teachers used demonstration techniques to present the science lesson and make art. The goal was to show learners about the process of something. Teacher demonstrations can introduce learners to specialized equipment and materials and show them how they are used. Teacher C used

demonstration techniques to present the science lesson. The goal was to show learners about the process of something. On the other hand, demonstration is used by teacher B in teaching art and craft. In teaching art and craft, the teacher provided tools and materials to make handicrafts. Based on the observation and interview result, it is assumed that demonstration can draw learners' attention to the psychomotor skills. More importantly perhaps, teacher's demonstrations can provide learners with opportunities to develop key scientific skills.

Story telling

The observation shows that Teacher A and teacher B applied retelling story to teach the student about morality. This activity was implemented in circle time or in the library. The teachers chose some themes such as kindness, apology, respect and various other good themes. The teacher used gestures, mime, facial expressions; various pace and tone to keep the learners' attention. The teachers used the pictures book as the media to tell the stories. Based on the finding above, it is concluded that young learners have an innate love of stories. It is a way for learners to develop an understanding, respect and appreciation for other cultures, and it can promote a positive attitude to people from different lands, races and religions.

Reading aloud

Based on the observation result, Teacher B used reading aloud technique to teach reading comprehension. The teacher wrote the text on the board and gave an example of how to read the readings per sentence. Then the learners read the sentences or text loudly. Whereas, teacher A implemented reading aloud before he started the class in the morning. It is noteworthy that reading text aloud provides a way to help all learners to access the material and develops their skills as active listeners. By reading aloud, the learners can become a fluent reader and they can recognize how to pronounce unfamiliar words.

Dictation

During the observation, dictation was held in two lessons namely Phonics and Indonesian Language. The material of the dictation was Phonics list or language that has been taught in the previous week. Three teachers implemented the dictation technique by asking the student to write down the words mentioned by the teachers. Based on the finding, it is noted that dictation is an effective technique which can reveal learners' vocabulary and learning outcomes to some extent. It provides writing practice for English-language learners.

The problems of the teachers in applying the certain teaching techniques

Singing a song

Learners' lack of self confidence

During the observation in the Kindergarten A1 class, the researcher found that there was a less confident student when called to come to the fore class. The student was reluctant to move forward in the classroom, so Teacher A asked his friends to sing together

Learners' uncontrollable movements

The problem found in class Kindergarten C when teacher asked to sing "parts of body" song. Some of them shouted too much and it made the song unclearly heard. In applying "team games" there are some students who were too eager to take their friend turn to play the game. While in the kindergarten B class in applying the guessing pictures game, the teacher got a problem. While the teacher was still reading the clue, almost all of students raised up their hands while shouting tough to guess even though the clue has not been completed by the teacher. It made the teacher instructions unclearly heard. The teacher then asked students to calm and listen to the clue until finished.

Presentation, Practice and Production (PPP)

Learners were less focus on teachers' presentation

In implementing PPP in the learning process, teacher A got some learners who were less focused. Based on the observation in the Kindergarten A1 class, when the teacher explained the material some students were not paying attention to the teacher's explanation. Observation result in Teacher B found that the learners were difficult to follow the teacher instructions. In art and craft, the problem occurred because the motor skills of young learners were not fully developed, so they are difficult to practice the teacher instruction..

Drilling

Learners' misunderstanding of the spelling words and the story

During the observation, learners simply have to repeat words, phrases or other materials after the teacher. The problem was found when the teacher B used drilling techniques through spelling words. Based on the observation result, it was shown that when the learners did not know to spell the words, the teacher had to explain more about the words mentioned. The teacher overcame it by asking the other student. Based on the observation result in kindergarten A1 when teacher A was telling about "The cat and white egg" story, some students were not paying attention and also kept playing something else. Teacher A admonished them to pay attention to the story

Reading aloud

Learners' inability to read and to write the word or sentences

Based on the observation and interview, problems arose in reading aloud because young learners were still in the process of recognition of letters and words. The problem can be solved by providing reading exercises as often as possible.

Dictation

Based on the observation result, when dictation lessons some students had trouble in writing the word mentioned by the teacher. The teacher should repeat the word several times accompanied by the sound of the letter to make it easier for students to write the word

Teachers were difficult to explain the lesson material

Based on the observation, it was found that the teacher has a little problem in explaining the material. Explaining the lesson concept to the young learner is rather difficult. It is due to the students' limited thinking ability. The teachers should use the language as simple as possible that possibilities can be understood by young learners.

Demonstration

Teachers failed in their science experiment (science class)

In the implementation of demonstration techniques in Kindergarten A1, the problem arose when the experiment failed in teaching the science class.

The best teaching techniques implemented by the teacher

Playing games

The observation showed that the using games was effective enough to raise the learning spirit of learners in three classes; kindergarten A1, A2, and B. In addition the classrooms atmosphere was fun, not tense and learners ask to continue the game. The lessons were easily understood by students because they were constructed through games. It was supported by the teachers' comment in interview as the following:

Teacher A: " *Through games, they will be more excited. Learning while playing is so fun/ not tense*".

From the description above, it is concluded that playing games is the most suitable method applied to teach English to young learner.

Demonstration

Based on the observation and interview, the application of demonstration techniques in teaching was effective enough to attract students' attention. The observation showed that the interaction between teachers and students was interactive when they created art and craft and did the experiment in science class. Learners love to follow lessons because they see and do it directly. This is supported by teacher comment as the following:

Teacher C: "*It is interesting because children are directly experimenting. So there is experience.*"

From the observations and interviews, it is concluded that demonstration is one of the best teaching techniques in teaching English to young learners.

Presentation, practice and production (PPP)

The observation showed that teachers used this technique in running class to explain the main subject. The teachers used it because students do not have sufficient background knowledge, so teachers should use presentation techniques as a first step to provide new knowledge for young learners. When applying PPP technique by three teachers, the students paid attention seriously to teachers' presentation. The classroom atmosphere was so quiet and serious, so the teacher

freely explained the material. Furthermore, students were given exercises based on lessons that have been explained by the teacher; almost all students were able to do the exercises correctly. It was supported by teachers' comment as the following:

Teacher A: *"I use the presentation method because I think it's the right way for their age. They have still basic knowledge. So, they should be given the material then they process it"*.

Based on the finding, it is concluded that PPP is one of the best teaching techniques for teaching English to young learner.

CONCLUSION

The study is concluded that in order to vary the teaching techniques in teaching English to young learners, particularly at Bambini School Makassar, the teachers apply singing a song, playing games, presentation practice and production, drilling demonstration, storytelling, reading aloud, and dictation. However, the teachers faced some problems in teaching but they can tackle the problems by provoking and inviting the students' interest in playing games, demonstration and presentation practice and production.

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