

THE ENRICHMENT OF LEARNING ENGLISH MODEL BASED ON DRAMA AT MARDISIWI ISLAMIC KINDERGARTEN IN GENDROPRASTO SURAKARTA, INDONESIA

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Abstract

In Indonesia, it is common for kindergartens to include English in their curriculums. Most teachers and parents assume that the children will absorb any information easily, including English as a foreign language. Mardisiwi Islamic Kindergarten (MIK) in Surakarta is one of kindergarten which encloses English into its curriculum. The study was qualitative research using Research and Development method. The source of the data derived from the interviews with the headmaster, teachers, and the students of MIK. In addition, class observation and documentation were conducted. The data was analyzed by collecting, reducing, presenting, and determining the conclusion. In fact, several problems arise dealing with the teacher's expertise, method, and learning material. This study was aimed to identify the learning models, classify the strength and the weaknesses of the models, and to propound a teaching model to be implemented in Mardisiwi Islamic Kindergarten. The model covers the learning process, time allotment, media, and method. It also involves drama-based learning method.

Key words: *kindergarten, English, model.*

Author's biography



Sri Slamet. She was graduated from Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta (UMS) for S1 degree, majoring on English Department. For the first S2 degree, she has got from Sebelas Maret University, majoring on Translation, and the second S2 degree, she has got from UMS, majoring on Basic Education. She is a lecturer at Childhood Early Education Department at Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta. Her major subject is Teaching English.

1. Introduction

The existence of English in Indonesian sectors of life is undoubtedly, it ranges from business to education sector. In academic fields, mastering English language is considered to be a requirement for student to expertise their studies. It is believed that numbers of modern technologies are adapted from the Western, such as USA and English. As a consequence, many students are eager to learn English. It also encourages

the parents to introduce English to their children, particularly in the early age, with the expectancy it will make easier for the children to learn English in their next levels of study.

Kindergartens begin to include English as one of local content in the curriculum. In a side, the inclusion of English in numbers of kindergarten becomes a gimmick for many parents. Parents assume that the children will absorb the information and lesson given to them without difficulty. Additionally, in the early child education, the lesson is delivered to the children by playing method. Parents are secure about their children's emotional development since they consider the teachers will not oblige them to master the lesson. In the other side, several problems arise among the kindergarten staff. Despite the inclusion of English in the curriculum, it is not preceded by supporting resources including teachers, equipments, media, and methods.

Various methods and curriculums are demonstrated by kindergartens in Surakarta. Some of them apply English incidentally, while others apply it on scheduled basis. Mardisiwi Islamic Kindergarten (MIK) is the first group. English Learning in this kindergarten is delivered based on the readiness of the teachers and the availability of the facilities. Several findings related to English Learning in MIK were also highlighted as follows: (1) Most of the facilities are incomplete and defective, thus, they cannot be used optimally; (2) The absence of English Learning in the regular schedule; (3) The teachers' various backgrounds of discipline, in which some of them are lacked in communicative skill, particularly in pronunciation.

Based on the previous findings, this study was aimed: (1) to identify the English learning model in Mardisiwi Islamic Kindergarten in Ngendroprasto, Surakarta; (2) to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the English learning models which have been implemented in kindergartens; (3) to offer an English language development model to be implemented in kindergartens.

2. Research Method

The study was a qualitative research. It was conducted in Mardisiwi Islamic Kindergarten, Surakarta. It was preceded by the collection of data by conducting interview, observation, class recording, and documentation. Source of data were the informants, encompassing the headmaster, teachers, and students in Mardisiwi Islamic Kindergarten. In addition, archives and documents in the form of Curriculum, Annual Program (Prota), Semesterly Program (Promes), Weekly Activity Plan (RKM), Daily Activity Plan (RKH) and other supporting documents were also included. Qualitative analysis was done to obtain systematic picture of the problem statements. The steps of the analysis were collecting, reducing, presenting the data, and taking the conclusions from them.

3. Results and Discussion

English Learning Process

The English class took place on Saturday, April 19, 2014 and began at 7.45 A.M. The duration was 2 hours 45 minutes. The theme was "The Universe". The methods were Brainstorming, Question and Answer, Gymnastic, Song, Listen and Repeat. The media were white board, board marker, magazines, and assignment book.

The students started warming up in the school yard before having the class. The teacher initiated the class with a prayer and recited a Sura from the Quran. It was followed by a greeting by singing the song titled "Good Morning". The students were questioned about the day and date and invited to count numbers from 1-10 in English. They were also asked to voluntarily demonstrate their capability on counting in front of the class. Occasionally, the teacher gave compliment to the students who perform well. The main lesson began at 8.20 a.m. The teacher showed the students the picture of tree, flower, and mountain. She introduced them in English and asked the students to repeat it three times. It was continued with an assignment on the theme before shifting to other task (coloring and free drawing). The teacher assigned

an asterisk on the student's book as a notice that she/he had completed the task. After having a break, the class had a story-telling. Once it finished, the teacher reviewed the lesson learned on that day and repeated the vocabularies that had been given, namely 'tree', 'flower', and 'mountain'. The activity of that day was closed by singing, praying, and farewell greeting.

The process of learning in the Mardisiwi Islamic Kindergarten turns out to have both the strengths and weaknesses. The strengths are elaborated as follows. *First*, the class was adjusted to the theme given at that time. There was interrelation between the theme and the materials. *Second*, the teacher used the Educational Demonstration Media (EDM) which was available in the classroom. *Third*, the teacher had capability in controlling the class and memorized the names of the entire students in the class (Group A was a small class of 12 students). *Forth*, the improvement of child's development could be implemented simultaneously in the class: Cognitive development by counting numbers, Motor skill and physical development by coloring and free drawing, and Language development by recognizing new vocabularies. *Fifth*, the learning process was complete; it comprised the opening, apperception, core, evaluation, and closing. The weaknesses of the learning process were: *First*, it relied mainly upon the human resources. Educational background of the teacher was not English, thus, it became a main obstacle in the class due to the limit of teacher's vocabulary. *Second*, asynchronous activity in the class—which was coloring calligraphy in magazines, circle, triangle, and rectangle shapes—whereas the theme being presented at that time was The Universe. *Third*, despite of using bilingual, most of the learning process was communicated in Bahasa. It focused primarily on the introduction of some vocabularies related to the theme.

The learning method practiced by the teacher is the whole language method (Masitoh, 2002). This method emphasizes the involvement of teacher's role and responsibility during the school time to promote the development of student's language ability. Teachers also serve as the facilitator and mediator in creating a meaningful environment. They also have to synchronize the teaching materials and the syllabus that had been prepared at the beginning of the semester by adjusting the students' development (Lightbown & Spada, 1993: 116). Four stages of recognizing new vocabularies, namely introducing, modeling, practicing, and applying (Suyanto, 2008: 48) also had been carried out in the class.

4. Dramatization Learning Method in Kindergarten

English Learning with drama-based or dramatization method is a learning activity which include role playing of a story that demands integration among the players (Muiz, 2012). In dramatization, the students hold the scripts with a clear storyline, perform on a stage, and create an imitated atmosphere as near as possible to the original setting. It is intended to provide an opportunity to the students to express themselves and to imitate the behaviors of others.

As a matter of fact, this method has its strengths and weaknesses. According to Muiz (2012), the strengths consist of: *First*, it gives the students an opportunity to play an active role in dramatizing a problem and encourages them to be brave and confident to perform on the stage; *Second*, it brings a vivid atmosphere in the class as the students are likely interested in experiencing the scene; *Third*, the students will be able to contemplate the issue (brought in the play) as it will be easier for them to understand, to compare, to analyze, and to draw a conclusion based on their respective comprehension. Whereas the weaknesses of the dramatization method are: *First*, it deals with numbers of students and requires diverse characterizations; *Second*, the students frequently refuse to play their role because they feel ashamed or unconfident; *Third*, during the practice, the students who are not involved in the play become passive.

5. Suggested English Learning Model in Kindergarten

Based on the analysis, it is suggested that to improve the effectiveness of English Learning, the expertise of the teachers is very important. Teacher should have English educational background or English communicative skills. Furthermore, the method should involve *lecture, brainstorming, question and*

answer, song, listen and repeat. Lecture is used to give an explanation to the students with respect to what should be recognized, implemented, and practiced. *Brainstorming* is given as preparation, introduction, and warming-up in association with the materials. *Question and answer* is given to determine whether the students have understood the presented materials. *Song* is a variation to refresh after or in the midst of the learning process. *Listen and repeat* is aimed to strengthen the memory relating to the materials.

In addition to the regular media in the classroom, the use of real objects is recommended so that the students will easily find them in the surrounding environment and practice it. For the effectiveness, the teaching and learning process is carried out for 1-hour (60 minutes) and scheduled regularly twice a week. It is intended to focus on provision of the materials, instead of distracted by other activities. In a week, the themes should be correlated to convince the understanding process. For the steps of learning, it is suitable to maintain the regular class practice, namely the opening, apperception, core, evaluation, and closing.

6. Conclusion

Despite the assumption that English lesson is necessary, it is a non-regular subject in Mardisiwi Islamic Kindergarten in which English Learning is given incidentally. However, there were several positive things advocated by the class. The theme was compiled with the themes in the current kindergarten curriculum. The teacher was the regular teacher in the class, hence, the class could be managed well. The utilization of EDM that were available in the classroom was effective, the students were familiar with the objects. The teacher applied the appropriate teaching method, for instance *listen and repeat*, in order to introduce new vocabularies to the students. Several children's development could be promoted in one single process, including cognitive, motor and physical skills, language, religious, and moral-value development. The learning process, namely opening, apperception, core, evaluation and closing stages had been practiced. However, the evaluation was evidenced to reveal the fail of the children in recalling the new vocabularies.

In order to overcome the various shortcomings and to utilize the strength in the aforesaid learning models, the drama-based English learning could be used as an alternative. Classroom teachers with an English education background would be able to maintain the learning environment intensely. The package of the method, media, themes, and times would be presented on a compact and interconnected process of learning. It is expected that this integrated model will be successful for the effective and efficient English learning.

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