

ENGAGING INDONESIAN KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS WITH ADAPTED SONGS TO EMPOWER YOUNG LEARNERS' CULTURAL AWARENESS

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Abstract

English for Young Learners becomes an interesting issues in the contexts of English acquisition. However, English learning in the areas of young learners in Indonesia is still rarely investigated. Thus, this paper is aimed to describe how Indonesian Kindergarten Students learned English from adapted English songs in their classroom. A group of kindergarten students participated in the study. All data were collected through participant observation. The results indicate the students were engaged in joyful English learning. Students were motivated and having fun of learning. The students were involved and participated in the singing practices. From the findings, cultural awareness of Indonesian traditional children songs and the ownerships of the cultural artefacts were also discussed.

Keywords: *EYL, Indonesian Children songs, engagement, cultural awareness*

Introduction

Learning a language in early stage of children language acquisition is crucial. In this period, children learn and develop their language in their peak performance. Even this context is important, however, English learning in the areas of young learners in Indonesia is still rarely investigated. Thus, this paper is aimed to describe how Indonesian Kindergarten Students learned English from adapted English songs in their classroom

Kindergarten students earn meaningfulness as the language learning itself is closely related to authentic material (Royani, 2013; Kristyana, 2014). Authentic material play significant role in language learning and language acquisition as the students will easily get in touch in the classroom as the materials used is available around them . In this interaction, it reaches learners' interest by (McCurdy, 2015).

Methods

This research employed a descriptive case study. As Yin (2009) noted case study is suitable to explore and understand a single or a group of people. In this current research, the context took

a Madrasah Diniyah (Islamic Kindergarten) in Cirebon. All data were collected by participant observation under the permission of the gatekeeper after confirming research consent and ethics. The data were qualitatively coded and analyzed according to the theories of psychological empowerment.

Results and Discussion

Classroom outlook: motivated and joyful English learning

The findings show that the English teacher was able to enthusiastically invite young learners of the classroom to involve in singing a song. e.g. Mother's love

One and one, I love my mother,
Two and two, I love my father too,
Three and three, I love brother sister,
One, two, three, I love everybody

In this classroom interaction, all young learners were involved. Most young learners were actively singing the song. The singing participation is not the same as the whole class. However, young learners shared their willingness to learn. Once, three young learners were not fully engaged to participate in singing the song at this day as shown by the result of the following observation.

There was one girl sitting against the wall while follow to singing. Two boys in the back side of the room were giving their ignorance as they were singing. The one, sitting in the middle of the backside, did not pay direct attention to see the teacher [**less attentive**], and the other seems enjoyed his mini toy as he was singing, too [**less attentive**].

As this occurring was running on, it is not a matter of the teacher's ignorance. Moreover, the teacher argued if this was much better than previous meetings.

When I entered the classroom for the first time, the students were rarely seen in the their rooms [**ignored classroom**]. When some of their friends joined singing, then, they let their friends knew about it...as the results, no young learners were left outside or ignored [**enjoy and motivated**].

This excerpt of interview indicates of singing is an activity that young learners want to see and join (Kristyana, 2014). The last part of the observation, the field note, shows comprehensive indicators that the implementation of the children-adapted song works out.

In early morning, I found the young learners and the teacher were highly motivated and fluently having a sermon "Good morning children...! How are today?...I'm fine, thank you and you?!...[**learning enthusiasm**]".

All students were enthusiastically learning English in the day classroom. The teacher was at the front of the class as learning control was her. At least, it confirms that implementing singing a song as the English instructional strategy is enable the young learners to learn and pay attention to the class learning activities (Intani, 2015).

Building Sense of meaningfulness

Learning engagement provides meaningfulness to the young learners (Bogler & Somech, 2004). The meaningfulness here is potentially resulted from the implementation of the togetherness in singing the following of my family song.

One and one, I love my mother,
Two and two, I love my father too,
Three and three, I love brother sister,
One, two, three, I love everybody.

The young learners are also having high motivation and enthusiasm to learn English for the following lyric of about thing.

About things

Tell me what this
Tell me what this
Tell me what this
Tell me please

Tell me please
Tell me what this
Tell me what this
Tell me please

This is a book
This is a book
This is a book
I tell you

I tell you
This is a pen
This is a pen

The meaningfulness is closely related to authentic materials as suggested in Royani, (2013) and Kristyana (2014). In the other contexts, this findings support (McCurdy, 2015). All findings are confirmed that using authentic learning material boost learning interests.

Sense of Competence

Students showed their ability to speak (Kristyana, 2014) and be better learning performance indicate their sense of competence (Weimer, 2014). The children can:

- a. Understand abstracts
- b. Understand symbols (beginning with words)
- c. Generalise and systematise. Scott, Wendy & Yteberg (2004)

As empowerment also means as a process, therefore, competence is seen in term of the speaking performance. The ability of the young learners to sing a song at the front of their friends indicate their competence.

Impacts

The following descriptions of the cognitive, social and emotional and physical characteristics of young learners are a general representation only; it is not possible to describe exactly the characteristic or the approximate age at which it occurs. Cognitive growth characteristics present clear differences between young learners and adults. The attention span of young learners in the early years of schooling is short, as little as 10 to 15 minutes; they easily diverted and distracted. They may drop out of a task when they find it difficult, though they are often willing to try a task in order to please the teacher. As children progress from 5 years old to 12 years old, they are developing abilities to think in new ways and are moving towards being able to reason in a systematic and logical fashion in adolescence.

... that empowered students are not about the students who take over the classroom. It is about the how students do learning. So this is about the process not product. He continued that empowered students are motivated, confident, and ready to tackle the tasks they have (Weimer, 2014).

In learning sense, empowered students have feelings of motivated, confident, and prepared for completing provided tasks. (Emiley Loyd as cited by McCurdy, 2015). In more specific indicators, the parameters are as indicated in the followings.

1. Students felt they took more responsibility for learning
2. Students developed for greater interest in the content taught
3. More times were devoted to all aspects of students' work
4. Grades were accepted (Luechauer & Shulman, 1992 as cited in Sullivan, 2001).
5. They learn more, and they learn better (Weimer, 2014).

Conclusion and pedagogical implication

The implementation of the Indonesian children-adapted song in learning English is not only empower young learners but it also provides them meaningful path for learning their own-cultural artefacts, i.e. Indonesian children songs.

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