



Exploring English Language Teaching Strategies: A Case Study in Kindergarten School at Mataram, Indonesia

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Abstract. Introduction to English language learning for young learners is important in building children's basic language skills. This study aims to explore and examine the introduction of English to early childhood in Mataram City, including the similarities and differences between the three kindergartens in terms of English learning and their relationship to the urgency of the English language for young learners. Using a descriptive qualitative method, this study observed teaching practices at kindergartens, evaluating the approaches used by teachers and their influence on student engagement. The results showed that learning English early improves language skills and encourages significant cognitive and social development. In addition, an introduction to English helps children build confidence in communicating with others and preparing them to face the challenges of globalization. This study also highlights the importance of fun and interactive learning methods to increase children's learning motivation. Thus, mastery of English in kindergarten gave children a competitive advantage in their future education and careers. Therefore, educators are expected to be able to create an interesting and supportive environment so that children are motivated to learn English effectively and enjoyably.

Keywords: Exploring, English teaching strategy, Kindergarten.

1 Introduction

Language is closely related to symbols or sounds that function as a means of communication in everyday life. Speakers can convey ideas, information, and thoughts through these symbols and sounds as part of the interaction process. This also applies to the use of foreign languages, such as English, where a person must have sufficient vocabulary mastery to communicate fluently [19]. In introducing English vocabulary, a teaching method is needed that suits individual characteristics, because everyone has a different way of learning a foreign language. Many studies show that children can absorb foreign languages better than adults [11]. However, children are more interested in things that are concrete, exploratory, and creative. Therefore, teaching English to children should use a method that involves interesting visual media, so that children become more enthusiastic and interested in learning [23].

Introducing English from an early age has a very important role, considering that English is a global language that is widely used in various countries, so it can facilitate interaction when abroad [16]. Currently, many educational institutions have started introducing English to children from an early age, even international schools have made English the main language in the learning process [5]. By learning English from an early age, children are allowed to access knowledge and technological developments more widely, while still maintaining the nation's cultural values. This is a very important aspect in preparing them to face future challenges [7].

The method of teaching English in early childhood is in line with Lucas [15] who stated that children's ability to learn new things is much higher than what is often assumed by adults. Children can use past experiences to predict the future and make decisions based on their future needs and plans [14]. Children can recognize and remember hundreds of words even before they can speak fluently because their memory capacity is much greater than adults often assume. This view contradicts the notion that introducing a foreign language early can hinder a child's development.

In introducing English to young children, it is important to consider their characteristics, developmental level, and readiness to understand, process, and adjust learning materials to suit their conditions and needs. Before being able to speak, children listen a lot and do physical activities in the process of learning their first language, such as reaching, moving, and grasping. When learning their first language, children respond more physically before finally starting to give verbal responses [20]. This process allows children to master a new language by directly listening, imitating, and experiencing.

The statement above is supported by the researcher results observed at kindergartens in Mataram where several Kindergartens introduce English to students to form the basis of children's language skills. Teachers at the school create a special curriculum for English in the hope that children can add vocabulary and simple phrases through fun and interactive activities. The curriculum used is teaching materials that come from the internet, guidebooks, and the applicable curriculum of Merdeka and Cambridge Curriculum. Therefore, an effective approach to introducing English to young children is to utilize media that suits their needs to provide a positive influence [24]. With the use of appropriate media, children would find it easier to absorb English as a foreign language naturally, continuously, and practically, while feeling comfortable and not feeling burdened during the learning process.

2 Research Method

This study employed qualitative research using a case study method. The case study aims to explore the introduction of English to early childhood at kindergartens in the city of Mataram, namely Tunas Daud, Tadika Puri, and Budi Luhur. There are 3 school principals and classrooms used as the research sample. The data collection method in this study was carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation collection. Observations were conducted to observe the learning process in the classroom and

see how English is taught and received by children. Furthermore, interviews were conducted with the principal and English teachers to understand the policies and teaching practices in each school. Meanwhile, documentation was conducted to analyze the curriculum, teaching materials, and activities related to teaching English. This research method aims to provide in-depth insight into the practice of teaching English to young learners. With a case study approach, this study identifies effective methods and challenges faced, as well as provides recommendations for improving English learning at the early childhood education level in Mataram.

3 Result And Discussions

Introduction to the English language at the kindergarten level has a very crucial role in forming and building the foundation of children's language skills that will continue to develop as they grow older and reach higher levels of education. Language development, especially at this time, is crucial because it forms the basis for communication skills, social interaction, thinking skills, and academic success in the future. Innovative teaching methods at the kindergarten level can include interactive and hands-on activities, multisensory approaches, game-based learning, the use of technology, and entering real experiences into the curriculum. These approaches not only stimulate children's cognitive development, but also support their emotional, social, and physical growth [10]. Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted in three schools, which are Tunas Daud, Tadika Puri, and Budi Luhur, several similarities and differences were found in the English teaching methods in each school. The following are the results and discussions obtained from the data.

Table 1. English Language Learning Approaches in the Three Schools according to Brown [6]

No.	Component	Result
1.	English Teacher Qualifications	The three kindergartens have competent teachers in teaching English. Each school has teachers with a good academic background in English. This shows their concern for the quality of English teaching by recruiting teachers who have the appropriate qualifications. In addition, teachers in these three schools also actively utilize various resources such as the Internet, guidebooks, and training to improve their ability to teach relevant learning materials. This view is in line with the statement [25] which emphasizes that success in teaching English to young children is highly dependent on the availability of adequate resources and facilities, as well as on an interesting and easy-to-understand curriculum.

2.	Teaching Media	All three schools use various electronic learning media such as television, speakers, and visual aids such as books and flashcards. This reflects an awareness of the importance of interactive media in the process of introducing English to early childhood. Visual, audio-visual, and digital media are used to facilitate the process of introducing English. The use of these media plays an important role in encouraging children to be active, interactive, educational, constructive, and explorative in learning English [24]. Electronic media such as television and speakers are used to play songs, videos, or other interactive materials that make learning more interesting and under children's learning preferences which are visual and auditory. In addition, flashcards and educational game tools are also used to help children understand language concepts more effectively. Educational Tools and learning media must meet certain standards, such as relevance to the teaching material, ease of access, and teacher skills in using the media. It is expected that teachers can utilize items that are around them and are still in good condition as learning media [4]. By using this media, student engagement in learning increases, especially since young children tend to have short attention spans. Visually and auditorily engaging media helps them focus and understand the material better.
3.	Interactive and Interesting Learning Methods	The educators at these three schools apply very interactive and interesting learning methods. For example, at Tunas Daud and Budi Luhur, activities such as playing, singing, and hands-on practice are highly emphasized. Meanwhile, at Tadika Puri, creative learning methods using letter and number cards are applied to help children learn English vocabulary. This approach makes a fun learning environment and students can attract children's interest, so they learn English with enthusiasm. Interactive methods like playing and singing not only make learning more interesting but also help children strengthen their memory and social skills. Using appropriate learning methods can improve children's learning outcomes optimally [17].

4.	Focus on Basic Skills	All three schools place equal emphasis on teaching basic skills such as speaking, vocabulary, and pronunciation. The goal is for children to be able to communicate using simple vocabulary in English, while improving their pronunciation. This emphasis on basic skills is essential because speaking and vocabulary are the main foundations for mastering English. As Siron stated language teaching includes three main elements: grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Early childhood is more easily able to absorb and imitate sounds and intonation, so pronunciation practice becomes more effective [22].
5.	High Student Enthusiasm	In all three schools, children showed very high enthusiasm in following English lessons. They felt happy and excited during learning, especially when the methods used were interactive such as games, singing, or the use of electronic media. This is in line with the study [10] which found that children tend to be very enthusiastic when singing songs and imitating movements related to English vocabulary. They also find it easier to remember vocabulary after repeating the song, and the interaction between the teacher and the children seems active, making it easier to understand the vocabulary being taught. The enthusiasm of these children is an indicator of the success of the teaching method applied, and reflects that a fun learning process can improve their understanding of English and build a positive attitude towards learning a foreign language in the future.

Apart from the similarities in learning English in schools, there are also differences in several things, including:

No.	Component	Result
1.	Number of English Teachers	One of the most striking differences is the number of English teachers in the three schools. Tunas Daud and Budi Luhur each have five English teachers spread across various classes, while Tadika Puri has three teachers. Despite the different number of teachers, the three schools still ensure that all students get the same opportunity to learn English well. • Tunas Daud has 5 teachers who are English language education graduates, with 2 teachers specifically teaching in classes A and B.

		• Budi Luhur has 5 English graduate teachers, all of whom are involved in teaching English. • Tadika Puri has 3 competent and experienced English teachers.
2.	Time Allocation	There are variations in the allocation of English learning time in the three schools. Tunas Daud allocates two learning sessions a week with a duration of 45 minutes in each session. In Budi Luhur, English sessions are held twice a week, but with varying durations, namely 30 minutes on Monday and one hour on Wednesday. Meanwhile, in Tadika Puri, English learning is carried out every day during school hours (08.00–12.30), where each session begins with an introduction to English. These differences indicate that each school has a different strategy for managing learning time, depending on the needs and curriculum applied. • Tunas Daud: 2 times a week, 45 minutes each. • Budi Luhur: 2 times a week, 30 minutes on Mondays and 1 hour on Wednesdays. • Tadika Puri: Every day from 08.00 to 12.30, with English learning integrated into daily activities. Tadika Puri provides more intensive exposure to English by integrating it into daily activities. This allows students to become familiar with English in various contexts. Meanwhile, Tunas Daud and Budi Luhur have a more structured schedule with special English sessions, which may be more focused but less intensive than Tadika Puri.
3.	Lesson Plan	In Tunas Daud and Tadika Puri, English learning planning has been well organized in the form of a daily lesson plan. However, in Budi Luhur, there is no specific lesson plan for English, and English materials are integrated into the lesson plan for Bahasa. This shows that although all schools plan English teaching, there are differences in how this planning is structured and implemented. • Tunas Daud has a special lesson plan for English that is adjusted to

		the Merdeka and Cambridge Curriculum. • Budi Luhur does not have a special lesson plan for English; English material is integrated into the Indonesian lesson plan. • Tadika Puri has a lesson plan that includes English, with detailed planning. Tunas Daud and Tadika Puri have more specific lesson plans for English, allowing teachers to design activities that are in line with English learning objectives. Budi Luhur with the absence of a specific lesson plan may face challenges in ensuring consistency and achievement of English learning targets.
4.	Learning Material Resources	Although the three schools use a variety of sources to source teaching materials, there are differences in the types of sources used. At Tunas Daud and Tadika Puri, teaching materials come from a combination of the internet, guidebooks, and the applicable curriculum (Merdeka and Cambridge Curriculum). Meanwhile, in Budi Luhur, materials are more often taken from the internet, especially Pinterest, and supporting books. This shows that each school has different preferences in choosing material sources, depending on the curriculum and student needs. • Tunas Daud: Using the Merdeka Curriculum, Cambridge, the internet, and guidebooks. • Budi Luhur: Materials from the internet (such as Pinterest) and books. • Tadika Puri: Material sources include the internet, book guides, and other relevant sources. Tunas Daud uses the international (Cambridge) and national (Merdeka) curricula, which provide a more comprehensive framework and higher standards for teaching English. Budi Luhur and Tadika Puri rely more on online resources and books, which, although varied, may be less structured than the formal curriculum.
5.	Teaching Methods	All three schools use similar methods, the difference lies in the specific approach. At Tunas Daud, playing and singing are the main elements of learning English.

		At Budi Luhur, there is an emphasis on playing outside the classroom and directly practicing speaking English. While at Tadika Puri, they use letter and number cards to help students understand English concepts visually. Focus on Basic English Skills • Tunas Daud Kindergarten: Focuses on speaking and vocabulary to build basic communication skills. • Budi Luhur Kindergarten: Emphasizes speaking and pronunciation to increase confidence in speaking. • Tadika Puri Kindergarten: Teaches speaking, vocabulary, and pronunciation in a balanced way. The focus on speaking and vocabulary is the focus in all three schools, Tadika Puri Kindergarten adds pronunciation as a skill that is also emphasized. They consider it important for children to not only know vocabulary but also pronounce it correctly.
6.	Learning Challenges	The challenges in learning English also differ in each school. At Tadika Puri, the main challenge is that some students do not fully understand the material and need repetition. At Budi Luhur, the challenge is maintaining the consistency of students' attention during the learning process, because their young age makes it difficult for them to focus for a long time. Meanwhile, at Tunas Daud, the challenge faced is the existence of students with special needs who require a different approach to the English learning process.

Based on the analysis of the similarities and differences in English teaching methods at kindergarten, the results showed that introducing English is very important in building the foundation of children's language skills in several ways. First, English is a basis for mastering foreign languages from an early age. Children at an early age have very flexible brains, so they are faster in absorbing new information, including foreign languages. According to neurologist Eric H. Lenneberg, a child's brain is very flexible before puberty [3]. Through learning English in Early Childhood Education, children can create a solid foundation for mastering a foreign language, which will be useful when they continue their education to a higher level. This opinion is in line with Rahiem and Perdana, who argue that starting English education at an early age allows children to develop a solid foundation for their language skills, which are very important for achieving academic and social success in the future [18].

Second, English is useful in improving children's cognitive skills. Introducing a foreign language to children at an early age can improve cognitive skills, including critical

thinking skills, problem-solving, and creativity. The process of learning a new language involves understanding different structures and grammar. Language is an important aspect in children's cognitive development, especially between the ages of 3-4 years, where language functions as a means of communication to interact with the social environment [12]. The characteristics of language development in children of that age include: 1) receiving language through hearing; 2) expressing language; and 3) hearing and retelling stories in a clear sequence [8]. Children's cognitive development is closely related to language development. Language helps children understand new information and skills. For this reason, children need to learn not only their main language but also a foreign language from an early age. By learning a foreign language, children can improve their cognitive abilities, and train their concentration and mental flexibility. In addition, they learn to distinguish between the use of their mother tongue and the foreign language they are learning, so that their brains are trained to be more focused [8].

Third, English leads to children's readiness to face the era of globalization. In this increasingly connected global era, English language skills are very important. Mastering English is a must for individuals to communicate and compete in the global market. English language skills have a significant impact on future career opportunities, especially in an increasingly global world of work [13]. Teaching English to children from an early age gives them an advantage in facing global challenges in the future. Mastery of this language also opens up better educational and career opportunities. Therefore, teachers need to create an interesting learning environment by combining songs, stories, and interactive games, which not only improve language skills but also encourage an open attitude towards diverse cultures, because English functions as a global language that covers various international contexts [21].

In addition, English can also increase children's self-confidence. The introduction of English in PAUD also contributes to increasing children's self-confidence in communicating with individuals from different backgrounds. With fun learning methods such as playing and singing, children can practice speaking English naturally without feeling stressed. Learning English can be fun, but for some people, it can be a source of anxiety, especially when they have to speak in public [9]. Therefore, children need to be accustomed to building communication skills from an early age. The greater their level of confidence in speaking English, the more fluent they will be in interacting. Self-confidence is likened to a key that opens the door to doubts that often hinder their efforts to find solutions. Children need to be trained consistently to increase their confidence in speaking English.

English language introduction in early childhood education prepares children for higher education. With a strong foundation in English, children will be better prepared for the curriculum in elementary school which may use more English, especially in schools with bilingual or international programs. Success in learning English at an early age depends heavily on the teacher's skills in delivering the learning process effectively. Learning English from an early age will provide many benefits for children, including cognitive development that is useful as preparation for further education. [1].

Ultimately, English provides opportunities for children to improve their social skills and cultural understanding. Learning English provides opportunities for children to recognize foreign cultures and improve their social skills. By learning another language,

children will become more tolerant of cultural diversity and more adaptable to diverse environments. The needs of globalization encourage Indonesian people to master foreign languages, including English. Students are expected to be able to use English actively to communicate, both verbally and in writing, both in the school environment and outside [2].

4 Conclusion

English language teaching at the Early Childhood Education level plays an important role in building the foundation of children's language skills. Early introduction to English can support children's cognitive, social, and emotional development and prepare them to face the era of globalization in the future. From the results of observations and interviews in three schools, that were Tunas Daud, Budi Luhur, and Tadika Puri. It was found that there were similarities and differences in the approach to learning English, including in terms of teacher qualifications, learning media, teaching methods, and time allocation. The importance of introducing English in PAUD lies in several aspects, such as the formation of a foreign language foundation at an early age, improving cognitive skills, preparing to face the era of globalization, increasing self-confidence, readiness for further education, and social and cultural skills. By using interactive, fun, and play-based learning methods, children can learn English more effectively and enthusiastically, so that the learning process becomes more enjoyable and memorable. Therefore, quality and planned English language teaching at the PAUD level is very important to provide children with a strong foundation in mastering a foreign language, which will provide long-term benefits in their education and life in the future.

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