

Upgrading The Early Childhood Education Teacher Capacity in Introducing English with A Simulation Strategy

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to explore the changes in Early childhood education teachers' capacity after joining a special training with simulation strategy for introducing English at a kindergarten. Teacher's capacity included two aspects in terms of English teaching strategies, developing material and media. Action research was applied for implementing the strategy involving 10 early childhood education teachers. In the first cycle, they still felt difficult in implementing the model. In the second cycle finally they could practice it well. Quantitatively, 90% of respondents acknowledged and admitted that the simulation strategy which they used have helped them to practice introducing English to young learners. Meanwhile, the 10% of respondents said that it was quite helpful for them. It can be concluded that training with simulation strategy was effective to improve early childhood education capacity in introducing English earlier. The successful model can be recommended for the other early childhood education teachers as a source of teaching for their students.

Keywords: Upgrading; Early childhood education teacher capacity; English for young Learners; Simulation Strategy.

The issue of internationalization has been announced by the government through the Long-Term National Education Development Plan (RPPNJP) 2005-2025 which states that the 2025 vision is to produce intelligent and competitive Indonesian people. Currently, we have entered the third period of the 2005-2025 RPPNJP, in which education development is planned as an educational stage that prepares Indonesian people to have regional competitiveness. The government wants the implementation of education to treat, facilitate, and encourage students to become independent,

creative, and innovative learning subjects. Education is strived to produce people who like to learn and have high learning abilities. Learners are expected to be able to adapt and respond well to new challenges, as it shown in **Figure 1** Strategic Plans of the Ministry of Education and Culture Year 2015 - 2019.

For that purpose, mastery of English becomes significant. However, current facts still show that there is an imbalance between the results and the process of learning English. The value and competency out-comes are still far from satisfactory, especially with the abolition

of English lessons in elementary schools. At the secondary school level, the opportunity for students to learn English is also very limited with the time allotted. However, this condition does not discourage parents from equipping their children with English either through formal or informal education.

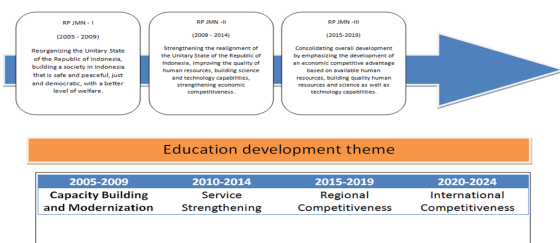


Figure 1 Education Development Theme from 2005 – 2025

Many parents want their children to be taught English at an early age because they realize that learning English will be easier when they are children. Scott & Ytreberg (2001) stated some benefits in teaching English since a young age such as they have more time than adults and learning English early can make them acquired languages early. They also have no fear in making mistakes. Still according to Scott & Ytreberg (2001) children age five to seven years old can do the following things such as talking what they are doing, plan activities, argue about something and tell others what they think. In addition, Shin (2009) described the characteristics of young learners as follows: 1) They are very energetic and physically active; 2) They are spontaneous and always be brave to participate or speak out what are on their minds; 3) Children are curious by nature and receptive to new ideas; 4) They are imaginative and enjoy pretending to make believe; 5) They can get distracted easily and their attention spans are relatively short; 6) They are egocentric and relate their ideas to themselves only; and 6) They learn to be social and relate to other peers.

This parental awareness has resulted in early childhood education or ECE having introduced English in their learning activities, including in Ponorogo district. However, the researcher assumes that learning English in

ECE will not achieve maximum results if the capacity of the educators does not have an educational background as an English teacher. Therefore, to fill this gap, researchers will develop a system for increasing teacher capacity in the English learning process from an early age as an alternative solution. As Scott and Ytreberg (1990, 2) describe, “Their own understanding comes through hands and eyes and ears. The physical world is always dominant.” One way to capture their attention and keep them engaged in activities is to supplement the activities with lots of brightly colored visuals, toys, puppets, or objects to match the ones used in the stories that you tell or songs that you sing. These can also help make the language input comprehensible and can be used for follow-up activities, such as re-telling stories or guessing games. Although it may take a lot of preparation time to make colorful pictures and puppets or to collect toys and objects, it is worth the effort if you can reuse them in future classes. Try to make the visuals on thick paper or laminate them whenever possible for future use. Sometimes you can acquire donations for toys and objects from the people in your community, such as parents or other teachers. A great way to build your resources is to create a “Visuals and Realia Bank” with other teachers at your school by collecting toys, puppets, pictures, maps, calendars, and other paraphernalia and saving them for use in each other’s classes

Early child educator capacity must be linear with the teacher’s responsibility in general. Capacity in educating a teacher is often identified with the term professionalism. According to Suyanto & Djihad (2012), sorted professional if it has the following characteristics: a) has a mature and developing personality; b) have skills to generate students; c) have mastery of strong science and technology; and d) His professional attitude developed continuously. Suyanto & Djihad (2012) in Christiani (2015) further outlines that the quality of a person’s professionalism is supported by several competencies, name-ly

1) the desire to always display that behavior. Approaching ideal standards, 2) always improving and maintaining professional image, 3) always pursuing professional development opportunities that can improve the quality of knowledge and skills, 4) pursuit of quality and ideals in the profession. Christianti (2015) added that early childhood educators professionals will have a characteristic that has a strong scientific foundation on child development and effective learning, be optimistic and have an approach “, warm and has empathy, spontaneity and flexible, has expertise in conducting reflection and analysis, having the ability to communicate with Many people, have the ability to lead, play full and are able to create fun learning activities, have high imagination and creativity, able to design programs and carry out learning that refers to the analysis of children’s needs, and the ability to continuously document and relax in Assessment on developments in children. Meanwhile, Laelasari (2013) illustrates the teacher as the heart of education. Without the pulse and active role of a teacher, the update policy in whatever education will be in vain. As good as well as anything a curriculum and strategic education planning is developed, if it is not carried out a quality teacher, it will not achieve optimal re-sults. According to her, good and superior education will always depend on high teacher quality. Therefore, efforts to become professionals, teachers can use the following strategies: 1) participate in or in service training, 2) reading and writing other scientific journals or papers, 3) participate in scien-tific meeting activities, 4) conduct research, 5) Participation in the Professional Community / Organiza-tion, and 6) Cooperation with Professional Power. Sumarsono et al. (2015) also suggested that the de-velopment of teachers’ professionalism not be carried out partially so as not to cause a gap both up-stream and downstream will be wider. Therefore, the two estuaries must be touched and balanced to be able to create quality teachers. He provides alternative activities

that can be done are through pre-service education, in-service education, induction, and lesson study. For this reason, Professionalism in becoming an early childhood educator must be cultivated or grown from the intention of the ECE edu-cator itself. Even though an educator already has a certificate as a ECE educator, an educator may not stop to improve its competence as a high form of responsibility for the professional status of owned.

In relations with English teaching early, Sophya (2014) suggested that the design of learning English should be directed at pleasant, entertaining or recreational activities and educating children, so that the learners can get motivation to learn more. Learning English during this phase will likely to be maintained or even be improved in the future so that interest in English will take place throughout their lives. The method / strategy applied by the teacher in the learning process of a foreign language cannot be separated from the two main assumptions, namely language learning characteristics and early child-hood characteristics. Both must be a major consideration in the learning process of foreign languages. For example, in learning foreign languages, such as English or Arabic or Mandarin for example, 1) the method of learning should be the same as the way they learn their native languages, 2) children need to be motivated and stimulated, 3) do more activities that encourages repetition 4) do activities by imitat-ing teachers, 5) activities by interacting with others, and translated activities both from native to foreign languages and vice versa.

One of the ways to make early childhood education teachers move on from the traditional meth-ods, the writer propose them with a simulation strategy with a game. Simulations represent real or im-aginary situations that cannot be brought into the learning setting. Examples are programs simulating the flights of aircraft, underwater expeditions, and life in a fictional city. Learners can build memory networks better when

they have tangible referents during learning. Games are designed to create an enjoyable learning context by linking material with sport, adventure, or fantasy. *Games* can emphasize thinking skills and problem solving but also can be used to teach content (e.g., basketball game to teach fractions). (Nuarsih, 2018) the simulation strategy is an appropriate procedure English teachers can apply solving the students' speaking skill problem.

Based on the formulation of the problem above, this research aims to: (1) Developing a model for upgrading ECE teachers in introducing English earlier; and (2) Evaluating the simulation results of the developed improvement model. The significance of this research is that: (1) The availability of model of teaching to (2) ECE teachers have the convenience and readiness in teaching English after getting the given trained strategy.

Method

The study is a classroom developmental study because it was designed to develop a model can be used by early childhood education teachers to implement the model in their classroom setting. The data were collected through trying out and questionnaire. The trying out was done by the implementation of a model to upgrade the ECE capacity to introduce English early. On the other hand, the questionnaire was to obtain quantitative the respondent's data of simulation implementation in upgrading the ECE teachers capacity for teaching English early. In analysing the data, a descriptive technique was conducted. In general, collected data were tabulated, described, discussed as well as interpreted for drawing a conclusion.

Results and Discussion

A model for upgrading the capacity of ECE teachers in introducing English with Simulation

The implementation of the model of upgrading ECE teachers for introducing

English with simulation strategy was done by involving 10 ECE teachers. At the first meeting, they were trained with some strategies suitable for introducing English at ECE. The material concerning with the various techniques were available and practiced with a fun and joyful. They were also introduced with the media which were applicable for ECE learners and easy to develop. The detail of simulation strategy of teaching English for ECE teachers as described in **Figure 2** below.



Figure 2 Model of Simulation

The ECE Teachers Responses of the Model

After joining the simulation, ECE teachers was distributed a questioner to know their responses to-ward the model had been implemented for some meetings. The result of their responses was summarized in the following **Figure 3**.

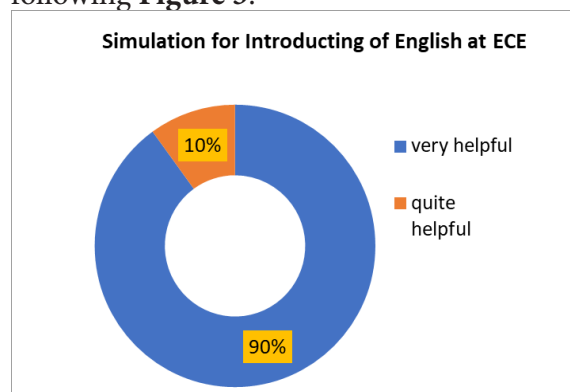


Figure 3 The Result of Questionnaire

This figure explains the result about the question "Did the training you have attended help in practicing this introduction to English?" According to the figure above, 90% of respondents acknowledged and admitted that the training which they attended have helped them to practice in-troducing English to young

learners. Meanwhile, the 10% of respondents said that the training was quite helpful for them. In line with a research from (Veda, 2019) that The findings were interpreted with the help of the classification framework of teacher belief change proposed the impact of the program on these four in-service English teachers' beliefs about English teachers' roles, excellent English teachers and English teachers' professional development was considerable, however, the de-gree, the nature and the sources of the impact varied across individual teachers. The findings suggest that the attitudes of teacher candidates changed substantially after their practice teaching experiences.

The ECE Teachers' Opinion toward The Model

The ECE teachers were also asked to participate in giving their opinion toward the model had been practiced for the evaluation aspect. The positive opinion will be meaningful for developing the model in wider usage scope. Their responses was tabulated in the **Figure 4** below.

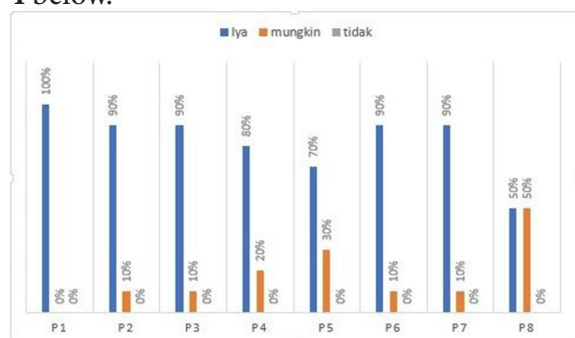


Figure 4 The ECE Teacher Opinion

This is the explanation based on the table above. The P1 is a question “Do you plan well when simulat-ing the introduction of English to students?” All of participants said yes with the question. As (Shin, 2009) it was stated that classroom management is a crucial part in teaching young learners. The aims are to foster stu-dent engagement and securing cooperation, thus the process of teaching and learning can occur. It is not ad-equate to only understand the methods and approaches for teaching without learning the basics of managing learners of a certain age. The skills

teachers need to master are as follows:

1. Managing the pace of class
2. Managing behavior with routines
3. Managing behavior with rules
4. Managing the classroom climate
5. Managing the language used in class

Moreover (Sieberer-Nagler, 2015) he argues that teachers need to master classroom management in order to teach successfully. For instance, teacher can give feedback and praise, handle students' mistakes, answer questions from students, and make clear structured lessons. Teachers also need to be able to reduce students' anxiety during learning processes, give motivation, humor and active time to learn. The praise from teachers to students is most effective when it is sincere and natural. They should use appropriate gestures and actions to accompany them. Teachers should try to motivate the students so that the students are more likely to pay attention. To be respected with the children is also very crucial. To react positively to wrong answers is a way to teach positively. The relationship between students and their parents is necessary. Students like when the teacher uses their names. The classroom climate is so important. To create a positive classroom climate is a main reason that the children like to go into the school, and then children also like to learn. The biggest challenge in teaching English to young learners according to Utami (2017) is dealing with misbehavior that might occur in the class. The students sometimes cry, or do not want to be in classroom, or do not want to follow the teachers' instruction, or being a distraction for other students. To arrive at the intended goal of the teaching-learning of English at elementary school, there are several factors which need to be considered. Those factors are the theories of the teaching of language to young learners (in this case, elementary school students), the management of English classroom and atmosphere, and factors to consider in designing the activities. In general, teachers should plan comprehended the theories of TEYL, learning English through

activities in social contexts to encourage students to speak the target language as well as manage the class-room to be saved for young learners. The teachers should be consistent and continues in classroom management, especially in building routines and establishing discipline. The teacher should never give up in one time trial, because the young learners need some time to adjust. Therefore, to meet the goal of TEYL, the English teachers should have understood that students' development related to not only language ability in general but also their soft skills – especially the students' behavior towards their social activity.

The P2 is a question “Do you select and organize teaching materials appropriately according to the predetermined theme?” 90% of respondents said yes. Only 10% said maybe. (Tomlinson, 2007) it was explained about these following six points of materials development. The materials that teacher provide to the students should:

1. Expose the learners to language in authentic us
2. Help learners to pay attention to features of authentic input
3. Provide the learners with opportunities to use the target language to achieve communicative purposes
4. Provide opportunities for outcome feedback
5. Achieve impact in the sense that they arouse and sustain the learners' curiosity and attention
6. Stimulate intellectual, aesthetic, and emotional involvement

(Nikoopour & Farsani, 2011) He added that the goal of language lesson is to be able to use the target language for effective communication. Due to the needs, interests, and motivation of language learners, they may show individual differences in their language learning. Materials used in language programs can be instructional, experiential, elucidative, or exploratory in that they can inform learners about the language, provide experience of the language in use, and help learners to make

discoveries about the language for them-selves.

The P3 is a question “Do you choose media or learning resources according to the child's theme and characteristics?” 90% said yes whilst 10% said maybe. According to (Galip Zorba & Tosun, 2011), kindergarten students are both curious and willing to learn new things, and learn faster than adult learners. However, they can get bored easily and they have very short attention spans. Therefore, English courses for kindergarten learners should not adhere to only course books; on the contrary, the courses should be enriched by the help of using additional instructional materials, activities, and portfolios. Since fun is the key aspect for attracting young learners' attention, English lesson should be supported by songs, realia, cartoon, games, etc. (Zatulifa et al., 2018) He suggested that English learning using android-based application was 45 minutes more efficient than traditional learning using books or student worksheets

The P4 is a question “Is the strategy or method in accordance with the learning objectives?” 80% said yes and 20% said maybe. According to (Lestari et al., 2019), there are four strategies in teaching planning. Those are curriculum, documents, teacher's professional development, and students' seat arrangement. While in the teaching implementation, there are many strategies such as icebreaking, recalling memory, brainstorming, discussion, game, listen and read, listen, and match, draw and write, write a paragraph, filling the blank, vocabulary writing, etc. Besides, there are five strategies in the teaching assessment. Those are daily tests, vocabulary tests, mid-term examination, final examination, and International Progression Test (IPT). The students' responses toward the implementation of the teaching strategies are their participation, understanding, memory, interest, and motivation increased during the learning process.

The P5 is a question “Is the strategy or method in accordance with the learning material?” 70% said yes and 30% said maybe.

(Shaikh, 2015) it was stated that it is difficult to say which teaching method is effective unless in a classroom of students with different need, learning experience, intellectual levels, cultural back-ground, and attitude towards learning English as a Second Language. Sometimes more than one method is used to bring out the desired results in the language classroom where communication becomes the key factor of teaching-learning process. Unless students learn to utilize the classroom method to express thoughts and feelings outside into the real-world situations, the learning cannot be successful no matter whatever teaching method is applied in English as a SL classroom. Teacher- student role becomes the center in bringing out the maximum within the limited time in a classroom.

The P6 is a question “Is the strategy or method in accordance with the characteristics of early child-hood?” 90% said yes and 10% said maybe. (Wulandari et al., 2020) it was stated that every teacher should be creative in designing the learning process and this includes selecting appropriate strategy. Teacher with lack of knowledge and experience of teaching young learners should be aware that the teaching and learning process should be fun and able to make young learner enjoy the learning process in an engaging way.

The P7 is a question “Are the learning steps fun for children?” 90% said yes and 10% said maybe. According to (Teachingenglishgames, 2021) website, here are the importance of making your lessons fun. By far the best approach for children for successful and fun one to one teaching is to use games and songs. In fact, if you want to inspire your pupil and have him or her want to come to your lessons instead of being forced to come by mummy, you must make the lessons fun. One of the tricks is to have a substantial library of games that work for one-on-one teaching. Another bonus is to have a strong sense of fun and be prepared to join in the games. If you teach using games children will love your private classes, and their parents will love you

for the results you achieve. A biproduct of this already very successful combination is that by teaching children in a fun way, you establish an important link between enjoyment and learning, which can enhance the rest of that child’s whole life.

The P8 is a question “Did you make an assessment in accordance with the teaching theme at the end of the lesson?” 50% of respondents said yes, whilst the other 50% said maybe. (Shin, 2009) She argues that in assessing young learners, we need to remember the characteristic of young language learners. They need carefully designed assessment tasks that they can perform either individually or with other students. Understanding the broad topic of assessment involves becoming familiar with a number of basic terms and concepts. Among these are:

- Assessment, testing, and evaluation (and their role in teaching and learning)
- Onformal and formal assessment
- Formative and summative assessment
- Criterion- and norm-referenced tests
- Integrative and discrete point tests

A comprehensive or ideal assessment system consists of all three. Assessment, testing, and evaluation help:

- Learners to know how they are progressing
- Teachers to know how effective the instruction is
- Administrators to know how well the program is making progress toward program goals
- Funders to see the results of their investment

Conclusion

This paper was intended to expose the result of implementation of the model for upgrading ECE teachers in introducing English which had been experimented with simulation strategy. The responses of the training participants were also already answered the questions on how The ECE teachers responded to the model through the questionnaire. Two points could be summarized from their

responds. First, almost 90% of the teachers felt that the model had helped them build their self-confidence to apply in their own schools. Secondly, they wanted that the model could be followed up for more invited participants. Therefore, this paper recommended that the reader can develop the model with some adaptation and innovation.

Co-Author Contribution

Author1 carried out the fieldwork, prepared the literature review and overlook the writeup of the whole article. In addition, author2 wrote the research methodology and did the data entry analysis and interpretation of the results. The author 1 was also responsible for the submission the article.

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