

**A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF THE ENGLISH TEACHING AND LEARNING  
AT SDN UNGGULAN AND SDN PERCONTOHAN  
IN BANJARMASIN BARAT**

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**Abstract**

*This thesis is aimed to describe the English Teaching and Learning at Elementary Schools in Banjarmasin Barat. Specifically, there are some questions that will be answered in the research. Those questions are (1) the availability of the curriculum used as a guide, (2) the teacher's educational background, (3) the suitable media that are used there, and (4) the English teaching and learning process at SDN Unggulan and SDN Percontohan. Various instruments such as interviews, questionnaires, and observations were employed. The time allocated for English teaching and learning process is too limited. It's one of the reasons why the English teaching and learning process runs imperfectly. Most of the teachers try to use songs, games, and other media to motivate the students in studying English.*

**Key words :** Class Action Research, SD Unggulan and SD Percontohan, English Teaching and Learning, Young Learners.

**A. INTRODUCTION**

The status of English lesson is clearly defined by the issuance of the Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture No.060/U/1993 dated February 25th, 1993, which stated that English can be introduced to the fourth grade students of elementary school as a local content in curriculum (Huda in Afrianti, 20004:1). As a local content subject, the Curriculum Center of the Department of Primary and Secondary Education does not develop any syllabus for it (Suyatno, 2000:166).

Right now, many elementary schools teach English to the students. Most of the elementary schools have English as one of the local content subjects. The teaching of English is begun for different grades and different kinds of elementary schools. Some schools teach English from the fourth grade, while others teach English from the first class.

Teaching English to the elementary school students is not an easy thing. It needs any kinds of skills, such as the way to handle the beginner class, the way to give new language to the children and the way to make them get interest to the lesson. In this case, teachers have the most important role in the English teaching, especially for the beginner students.

Besides the teachers, syllabus also has an important role in the teaching and learning process. Syllabus will guide the teachers in giving the lesson to the students. Syllabus will help the teachers in explaining the lesson to be better and better. When there is no guidance such as a syllabus, the activity will run uneffectively.

## **B. TEACHING ENGLISH TO YOUNG LEARNERS**

Before discussing some theories on teaching English to young learners, it is better to know the term of young learners first. According to Philips in Hazrianto (2001:7), Young learners are described as children from the first year of formal schooling (five or six years old to eleven or twelve years of age).

Children learn English in order to be able to speak by that language. As soon as they start learning it, they will know and understand English easily and quickly. Children are not interested in the language works and its function. Teaching children is a new field and was not a special need until a new curriculum was introduced (Sinaga, 2000:174).

In every formal education, there must be important factors in doing the teaching and learning process. They are the requirements for teaching, such as curriculum, teachers, the materials and media, and the process of teaching and learning itself. Here, we will discuss the factors which are related to the English teaching and learning more detail.

Teaching children is different from teaching teenagers. Children learn English depend on their developmental stage. According to Sarah Philips (1995:7), young learners respond to language according to what it does or what they can do with it, rather than treating it as an abstract system.

Children like to walk, to speak, to shout and to do some funny things to show themselves. In other words, they like learning by doing. In teaching young learners, teachers are hoped to use some kinds of media. For example, in teaching fruits, the teachers are hoped to bring the pictures of fruits to the class or bring the real fruits to the class. It will help the students much in mastering the lesson. Through that way, they can enjoy and understand the lesson well.

Besides having some kinds of media, teachers can also give a game which is related to the lesson. By having some game, they will be relaxed along the process of the teaching learning. In addition, it is suggested if the teachers give a reward to the winner in the game, although it is only a warm handshake or a great applause.

According to Matias Sinaga in Kasihani, there are some points that have to be considered when we are teaching children. They are : (1) teaching one thing at a time; (2) activities should vary; (3) lesson should be interesting, and (4) lesson recycle.

Each lesson in English consists of activities. These activities, which are divided into stages, make up the lesson. The activities are divided into three major stages: introducing a new language, practice, and communicative activities (Harmer in Kasihani (2000:18)).

Every teaching activity, especially the teaching of English requires an ideal classroom physical condition in order to create pleasant and good atmosphere. According to Said Zein (2002:15), there are some ways about how to deal with classroom physical condition problems: lightness / brightness, the acoustics, and the comfortable temperature and the air fresh.

Here are some principles of teaching children. They are :

- He (teacher) should be a broadly educated, resourceful, and enthusiastic person. (Anderson, Bumpass 1967).
- Eye contact is at least as important what is being said ... (Abe, 1991:267).

- Your ability to get into the world of the child-both in terms of the topics that you present and in the ways you present them is what will determine how successful your children's classes will be. (Abe, 1991:268).
- Since the teacher is the most likely the main source of the language, the words the teacher uses and most significantly-the way the teacher speaks one of the prime important. (Abe, 1991:266).
- Language objectives are integrated with a topic or subject which interests the children. ... Learners will be more likely motivated if their attention is focused on a topic or subject that they have an interest in or care about. (Hudelson, 1991:255-258).
- It is also crucial, in thinking about topic units, to consider what language learners might need prior to beginning the units, since it is not, feasible to expect children to begin the study of a topic such as animal in English, without some knowledge of English. (Hudelson, 1991:259)
- Another important thing to keep in mind when teaching young children is that there can be much reliance on written word. We can use various objects and real things to make the classroom alive. (Abe,1991:267).
- Teacher needs to interact with the children in English that is, using English that is related directly to activities in which children are engaged. (Hudelson, 1991:257).
- Since the young learners are children, the English teacher should know the children's teaching strategies (take for example: singing, playing, etc). (Sofyan, 2003:6)

Based on the information above, the researcher had done the research in finding the description about 4 points which are related to the English teaching and learning in the elementary schools in Banjarmasin Barat. They are the curriculum, the teacher educational background, the media, and the English teaching and learning process itself.

### **C. METHOD OF RESEARCH**

This research is designed with descriptive method. This method is concerned with providing descriptions of phenomena that occur naturally, without the intervention of an experiment or an artificially contrived treatment. Descriptive research can be heuristic or deductive. This method utilizes already existing data or non-experimental research.

By using that method, this research has described the curriculum, the teacher's educational background, the teaching media, and the English teaching and learning at the elementary schools in Banjarmasin Barat. The data has been collected as much as possible in order to obtain the complete information needed.

There are nine schools which are being the population of this research. The purpose sampling method is applied in this research. It means that the researcher determined which classes being observed. For each school, the observations of teaching and learning activities in the classroom were conducted twice to gain more valid data.

The data needed in this research are divided into four major parts. They are: (1) the availability of curriculum; (2) the background of the English teacher's education; (3) the media used for the English teaching; (4) the English teaching and learning process at SDN Unggulan and SDN Percontohan in Banjarmasin Barat.

Several techniques were employed here, namely questionnaire, interview and observation. The data which are collected from each instrument were ordered and

organized into four major categories. These categories were formulated based on the research questions determined in the beginning of the study. The researcher then provided some descriptions of the factual data found in this research.

The analysis is done by: first, describing the instrument and the data expected from the research. Then, presenting the factual data found in the research. Finally, the expected data found are compared and interpreted.

#### **D. RESULT**

The data are taken from the questionnaire to the English teachers. It gives much information about the English teaching and learning at the related school. Besides that, the interview to the English teachers, to the headmasters and the observation to the classes are also used to get more actual data.

##### **a. English Curriculum**

Based on the interview that are held to the teachers and headmasters, it is found that there is still no syllabus that are made by DIKNAS to the English syllabus of the elementary school.

The teachers have no spesific curriculum in teaching English to the students. The teachers sometimes teach the students based on the material that are available on the book. Some of them try to consider the students' capability in catching the lesson. If most of the students can understand the material well, they will continue to the next page. But, if most of them get difficulties in understanding the lesson, the teachers will try to explain it patiently. One reason why they do this because there is nmo absolute objectives that should be reached.

As a local content at the elementary schools, English is taught as an additional subject. So, the material that is taught to the students is based on the the teachers' thinking n wants. The teacher just try to make the students know English although very little.

The unavailability of the English syllabus for the elementary school makes the English teaching and learning condition has no concise objectives to be gained by the young learners. The schools hope the students have a chance to learn English as an introduction. Yet, it is not clear what is meant by introduction here.

##### **b. English Teacher**

In order to make the English teaching and learning process runs well and effectively, it is needed a teacher who has the requirement for teaching elementary school students, such as following the English for Young Learners subject.

Based on the data, it is found that almost all of the teachers have Englishl educational background. Although they never take the English for young learners subject, but most of them, ever follow the training for teaching elementary school students.

It also can be concluded that the chosen of the English teacher is not based on the quaification of the teacher itself, but it is based on the necessity of the teaching assignment at SDN Unggulan and SDN Percontohan in Banjarmasin Barat.

##### **c. Teaching Materials and Media**

Most of the teachers use media in teaching English for the elementary students. They try to use and prepare the most suitable media in teaching English to the students.

The materials that they choose based on the difficulty of the book. The interesting content becomes the best reason to decide the book.

Based on the observation that are held, it is stated that some of the teachers give exercises to the students without considering how difficult it is. The related exercises that are given by the teachers are more suitable for higher level students. Most of the questions are related to the grammar.

#### d. English Teaching and Learning Process

In the English teaching and learning process, all teachers tell the purpose before the teaching and learning process. They try to explain the purpose of the lesson, whether it is a kind of exercise, explanation, reading, etc. The teacher always try to make the students be focus on the subject first. They ask for the students' attention and guide the students in following the lesson well.

Most of the teaching and learning process run well. The students are enjoy in following the lesson. They are not afraid to ask any questions to the teachers. Sometimes, the time is felt very limited. When the teaching and learning process is not finished yet, the time is finished.

Based on the result of the observation, it can be concluded that actually the allocated time must be increased. In the process of English teaching and learning, the students does not only need the explanation, but also the drills that given repeatedly by the teachers.

It is advised for the English teaching and learning at SDN Unggulan and SDN Percontohan in Banjarmasin Barat to increase the numbers of meetings, from once a week becomes twice a week. By getting additional time, it may decrease the uneffectiveness of the English teaching and learning process itself.

Based on the observation, all of the teachers give an evaluation after the teaching and learning process finished. It can be in a written exercise, oral exercise, memorization, etc.

Considering the facts, the ultimate points that need to be considered is the reality if teaching foreign language is mostly aimed to make learners able to communicate using the language. In classroom, where it is only exposure for learners in this region, the teachers should emphasize and center only on the aspect or component of most real communication.

Specific description of each aspect here need to be more investigated through further research by using more complex instrument.

### **E. CONCLUSION**

Based on the research conducted, it can be concluded that:

1. The English teaching and learning process at the elementary schools in Banjarmasin Barat regency is held without any particular syllabus. From that, we can conclude that almost all of the elementary schools still have no specific objectives in teaching English to the students. The materials used in the English teaching and learning process are from many kinds of publishers. The chosen of the book is based on the school itself, such as Yudisthira, Erlangga, Dimensi, etc. The selections of the books are based on some reasons, such as : the simplest material, the cheapest price of the book, etc. Therefore,

- the teachers use the only available materials that can cover the needs of the students' characteristic in the teaching and learning process.
2. The English teaching process which authorized to the teachers is not only merely because of their capability and educational background in teaching English, but also because of the demand of sufficient teachers in teaching certain people. The research shows that most of the English teachers do not hold S1 Degree in teaching English. Although they do not hold S1 Degree for English yet, but they have much experience in teaching English and shows good capability in teaching English to the students. They show good capability in teaching English to their students. They can manage the class effectively and make the class more alive for the students.
  3. Most of the schools have media in supporting the English teaching. Some kinds of media can be found in the classes, but sometimes the using of them is not as intensive as possible. Some of the schools have flash cards, while the others only use the real objects that can be found in classroom. The number of media is very limited. But, in fact, almost all of the teachers try to use the media in giving the explanation once in a while. Besides that, they also have any kinds of pictures, captions, and some kinds of songs and games.
  4. Based on the observational data, the English teaching and learning process conducted in the classroom at SDN Unggulan and SDN Percontohan in Banjarmasin Barat runs well. Most of the teachers are able to teach the students in studying English. But, it is also found that some teachers teach the students without considering the understanding of the students. The important point that can be concluded here is that the English teaching that held there is not really aimed to make the learners able to communicate in English but it is only as a kind of introduction for the students. Some of the teachers use the same techniques in teaching process. As a result, sometimes the students are getting bored and uninterested with the lesson. There are many kinds of things that make the teachers get difficulties in giving the explanation to the students. They are in teaching pronunciation, translation, reading passage, vocabularies, grammar, memorization, etc. Last but not least, the teacher mostly tended to center their teaching in reading and writing activities rather than creating conditions of meaningful English learning activities for Young Learners.

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