

MASTERING TEACHING ENGLISH FOR YOUNG LEARNERS

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Abstract:

Teaching language to old learners is different from teaching language to young learners. Young learners have certain characteristics which are different from old learners so those influence their acquiring a foreign language. Teaching foreign language is easy if we understand the rules well. The rules are understanding characteristics of our students, mastering some suitable methods, and choosing suitable material. Young learners have certain characteristic distinguishing to the older learners. Related to the certain characteristics, the teacher must understand to differentiate the method they use in teaching English as a foreign language to the young learners. To empower the teaching, the teacher must master the material well.

Keywords: *teaching English and young learner,*

Introduction

Language has some skills to understand; listening skill, speaking skill, reading skill, and writing skill. Those skills have their own characteristics to be understood and to be mastered. Mastering all those skills needs some certain method too, but we can learn them as step by step. Every language teacher should understand well related to the skills when they are teaching language. It influences teaching the language. As a teacher should understand well which skill the students should learn first, how to teach each skill, and what the characters of the language learners. When the teacher understand those

well, it will be easy to recognize the learners, to choose the suitable method, and to find the suitable materials.

Teaching foreign language is different from teaching first language, even though some of the orders are same. Before we teach second language, of course we have to understand the first language then before we learn foreign language we have to understand the second language. Even sometimes we do not understand each of them well, but it should be better if we understand well. Those can help the learners easier to acquire the second language or foreign language. It is because the first

language can be used as a tool to explain and study second language and also foreign language. When the language learners learn the language they must find some difficult word or phrases, they can understand the meaning from their own language explanation or definition. Sometimes, different language has different definition and term, out of the context.

Related to teaching language, because language has some skills, teaching language also has some certain method to teach. And teaching language need much practice too to master the language. If the learners learn the theory of linguistics, they do not need to much practice the language, for example they do not need much to practice speaking and writing in a context. They just learn the theory of linguistics. Moreover, if the learners learn the language to teach it into Young Learners, they have to try to practice it actively, well, and fluently. It is because young learners are active learners need to be taught actively too. And usually the young learners emphasize on language practice. They need the language to be practiced and used. Most of them use the language orally. In Indonesia, now

English is out of curriculum for elementary school, even though at the previous period about 2010s Indonesian curriculum placed English Language inside. In Indonesia since 1994, elementary school have been taught English as a local content subject. According to Kunjana Rahardi, a master of socio-Linguistic Gajah Mada University (UGM), teaching English in early age will impact bad effect for the children related to the national language (Indonesia). Mastering mother language and national language will influence second or foreign language acquisition (voaindonesia, 2012).

Whereas, some schools places the English into extra classes or additional classes, some schools do not leave English as a compulsory subject, but in some countries English is a compulsory subject in the early primary grades (Niclove, 2009; pinter 2006). Moreover, Shin and Crandall (2011) showed that for recently years, about 50 countries in the world placed English Language as a compulsory subject at the third grade.

Many foreign languages are offered by some schools but English becomes first choices. The parents

believes that English is the first foreign language in Indonesia and by English their children can develop and explore their knowledge well, then their children can be easier to go abroad to reach their dream to be success and famous people. Many people want their children master the English since young or child. They ask because of the high demand of English

Teaching young learners are different from teaching older learners. Young learners have their own characteristics. Older learners have their intention to learn and study but young learners are not. Young learners just follow what they want and like. They do not really respect to other people. They like to enjoy their own life and style. Because of that, we need to understand their characteristics related to Teaching English for Young Learners.

Young Learners

Young learners are different from old learners of course. They are unique; they have smart brain which is fresh, clean, and fast. Most of them are attractive. Who is young learner? There are some opinions related to them. The British Philosopher, John Stuart Mill started to learn Greek at

three years old, but it was not generally children. Some of them said that young learners are children whose age less than 12 years old. According to Scooth and Lisbeth, young learners are they who have age under 11 years old. For the teacher who concern in teaching English to young learners they have to understand the characteristics of young learners in order understanding the students' needs, knowing the suitable method to teaching young learners.

According to Scooth and Lisbeth (1992) in Handoyo, there are some characteristics of young learners:

- Children age 8-10 are mature enough
- They have particular point of view
- They can describe the difference between fact and fiction
- They are curious of asking questions
- They believe of what is said and the "real" word to express and comprehend meaning/message
- They have distinct option about what they like and what they dislike
- They are open to what happens in the classroom and begin asking the teacher decision
- They can cooperate with other people and learn from another.

In addition, children are competent in mother tongue user. Children are easy to learn symbols, to interpret meaning without understanding the words separately, to do exploration of language, to make enjoyable situation, to fond of communicating (Halliwell, 1992). Children for elementary school are young learners, they have just limit concentration, not more than 90 minutes duration to study. So the teacher should make an enjoy learning in the class (Wulandari; 2012). Based on those characteristics, we cannot say that children do not have any world, do not understand the old people, do not understand the environment. They are really can feel the environment around them and they can say truth based on what they see and understand.

According Wendy and Lisbeth (1992), they divided the children into two levels, first; five to seven years old, second; eight to ten years old. They divide the pupils become two based on the experience of acquiring the language. The first level, they usually get not more foreign language experience, the second level, they who have more foreign language experience. It means that both level

sometimes have same age and those are not to much because of the age but because of they foreign language experiences. So, it is possible for the pupils of seven years old are into second level. In our country and culture we can divide the pupil based on the class they study if they study in formal school, but if the class is in informal school we can divide the pupils based on their foreign experiences or foreign language ability.

Teaching English for Young Learners

In a teaching context, teaching children foreign language are different from teaching mother language, but potentially, their acquiring and learning foreign language, and even they learn more quickly than they learn after puberty (McLaughlin, 1978). In other hand, Long (1990) stated that children are less capable of absorbing or acquiring foreign language. There are two kinds of classes in our country, formal school and informal school. Wherever the place of the young learner class is, they are young learners who learn foreign language. The teacher should understand and master in teaching young learners.

It was some explained above related to the importance and the choices of learning English as the foreign language. As we know that, recently some parents prefer their children to be master in English. They hope by learning the English early age can help the children easy to acquire foreign language. Even in some schools English does not become a main subject, it is just a local content subject. But the parent and also the teacher do not make side of it. As English teachers they just have obligation to educate and teach the students about English, it is what they should do.

English is one of foreign languages. Basically, children have their own language where they place in. Children are competent users of their language. They have their own symbols, abstract, generalize and systematize based on they syntax of their language in use. It occurs in general children language development. Then when the foreign language can come to them no one understand well exactly. It is because, it is almost same between learning first language for the children since early age and learning foreign

language for the the children or pupils who have the first language. Lisbeth stated that nobody has found the universal pattern of language learning which everyone agrees with. But much depend on the mother tongue of the people speak, social, emotional factors of the children's background.

An English teacher for young learners should be master of the English itself, the methods and models of teaching English, especially for young learners. An English teacher also must be able to be creative teacher, they can make and use many things become the requirement of teaching young learners which are suitable of it. For additions, as a teacher should teach using heard so the teacher can connect between what the teacher feels and wants to reach to the children. If the teacher can fell what the students' feel or connect their feeling to learn, the teacher will be easy to teach and the students will be easy to understand what the teacher delivered. When the teacher just what to teach and to deliver the material in not enough, it can be less of useful.

English is not main subject for the children to learn. It is just additional; moreover it is just a foreign

language. For the children it can be difficult, it can be easy based on their experience of foreign language. The children do not understand what for the English is. But as a teacher, we have to make the children like the English then the English can be accepted by them. Related to the characteristics of the young learners, what should we prepare for teaching English to young learners?

- the teacher should be attractive and careful to the children
- the teacher should always be happy and cheerful
- the method and the media should be interesting
- it is a must to include song and game
- the teacher should refresh always every time they feel bored

Children are mostly attractive, happy, and cheerful; so the teacher should be a bit like the children; cheerful, happy, and attractive. The teacher feels what the children feel, the children need to be cared and got more attention. If the teacher just teach the material, of course the children feel little lazy. It is because, children do not know the order of learning, they do not know the need of learning, and they just want to enjoy

their life. They do not realize that they are playing, making joke, and being happy while learning. That is what the teacher should do to the children; it is how to make the children learning without any forcing. Teacher should be happy and cheerful too because, the children will not feel enjoy the class if the teacher does not feel happy and enjoy the class.

Another preparation to teach English is method and media. The teacher should use interesting media and method; like song, colorful card, games. Those are suitable for the children. Children like colorful thing, games, and happy song. It does not mean that every meeting game and song include in teaching and learning process. It is just used in some of the whole meeting. There are some technics of teaching young learners according Suyatno (2007),

- listen and repeat
- listen and do
- song and game
- group discussion

English is foreign language which is different from children first language. It has different voice from “bahasa Indonesia”, so listening and repeating is suitable for the beginners,

young learner is the beginner. They like to follow the teacher, repeat what the teacher said and repeat what they listen. The children can do after they listen and understand.

For children, sometimes children, early age, cannot join in a group discussion. Ebru and his friends (2012) as trainer of young learners teacher stated that Teaching English for Young Learners is through visual and kinesthetic activities, contextual, meaningful, and the environment should be enjoyable. And based on some recent research related to teaching English for Young Learners claim that child-centered using music, dance, stories and songs provided natural opportunities for children to nurture positive response to their new language (Trujillo-Saez, 2001; Calabrese and Dawes, 2008; Enever et al., 2009; Moon, 2000, NR, 2010; Tinsley and Comfort, 2012 in Ebru et al. 2013).

Teaching young learners can use stories in the class, because children usually like to listen and tell the story too. Through the story, children can enrich the vocabulary, moral message, and get English experiences. When the children have curiosity to listen the

story, they try to understand the vocabulary what the teacher gives.

Songs in teaching English for Young learners

Song is some words and rhyme which is delivered in rhythm and beautiful tone. The teacher uses song to teach to make students interested in learning English, if they are interested in, they will be easy to learn and enjoy the class. Song is created to be enjoyed and not only be enjoyed but also to propose teaching and learning process. Teacher can use song to teach vocabularies, phrases, sentences rule, or others. So the teacher can decide the suitable song for the teaching and learning needs and purposes. So the children can enjoy the song while learning some materials, sometimes they do not realize that they are learning during singing a song.

There are some characteristic of songs for children:

- The notes of the song should be the easy to follow
- There are many repetitions, usually to memorize some vocabularies or phrases.
- Interesting, happy, fast and attractive
- The song is usually short

- The content of the song is related to the materials

The teacher hopes through the song, the children can sing a song out of the class too, and then they can memorize the materials happily and joyfully.

These are some orders in teaching English for young Learners using song:

- Listening a song and repeating

The teacher just plays the song then asks the students to repeat after the song is played. The repetition can be done by the whole class then randomly.

- Listening and filling blank space of song.

The teacher gives the students a piece of paper containing some missing word of the song, and then the teacher asks the students to fill the missing word based on the song.

- Listening a song and retelling the song

Usually the content of the song is a simple story. The teacher play the song many times then asks the students to retell the song randomly. It is suitable for 11 or 12 years old or the students who have

been more understand some vocabularies.

- Listening a song and memorizing the main vocabulary of the song

The teacher plays the song then explains some main vocabularies related to the topic or materials. Then the teacher invites the students to drill the main vocabularies. Afterward, the teacher asks the students to memorizing those vocabularies.

Those orders are based on the materials and the students condition or characteristics.

These are some examples of song in teaching and learning English for young learners:

- twinkle – twinkle little stars

- brush teeth

It teach the students to be diligent brushing their teeth, and understanding some vocabularies related to it.

“brush, brush, brush” 3x

“if you want to have clean teeth, then you mush brush, brush”

“if you want to have strong teeth, then you mush brush”

“brush, brush, brush, brush, brush, brush, brush

“your teeth help you to eat some food”

“every little girl, every little boy”

- body part song
- head, shoulders, knees and toes

This song is to teach part of body. Children can move their body based on the song.

- alphabets song

It is for the beginners and early age. The children will learn English alphabets and spelling words.

- color song

Usually *color song* is used with some pictures related to the color.

Teacher can make the song based on their idea and their note or rhythm, or the teacher can use other song's notes but the content or the rhymes are changed based on the teacher materials.

Games in Teaching English for Young Learners

Game is activities which are done based on the certain rule. The children will be happy through playing interesting games, because children like to play game. Playing games can invite the children become active and make an interaction to other people. It can train them to appreciate and respect other people. Some rules in

applying game in teaching English for young Learner: 1) the game should be an interesting game. 2) the game should have simple rule, it means easy to be obeyed. 3) the game should correlate the material 4) the game should train the children discipline, honesty, and other good characters.

These are some examples of games:

1. Whisper game

- 1) The students sit in a line
- 2) The teacher gives the students a word / a phrase/ a sentence to the first student. It can be in a whispering or in writing.
- 3) The first student whispers to the next students by turn, to the next students. The whispering should be done just once, no repetition.
- 4) The last students explores the word or the phrase or the sentence soundly
- 5) If the class is a big class, it can be divided into some groups then become such as competition. Who can explore the word/the phrase/ sentence earlier, the group becomes the winner.

2. Guessing game

- 1) The teacher has some words in some piece of paper each word.

The word have been taught to the students

2) There are some models in front of the class, each model gesturing some signs or giving some clues related to the word will be guessed.

3) Other friends/ audiences guess the word is

4) The group or the student who can answer as many as possible becomes the winner

3. Question and answer game (banana game)

1) One model comes forward, he has word *banana*.

2) The audiences will give the model some free questions

3) Then the model must answer only "banana"

4) The audience are forbidden to laugh, if there someone laugh, he must become the model in front of the class.

4. Simon says

1) The teacher gives some orders by saying "simon says:(eg: I am sitting)".

2) The students must obey the order (the students are sitting)

3) If there someone disobey/ wrong, he gets punishment.

5. Change place, please (by: Marriana Burlina in Fiona C. et al. 2012)

1) The chairs of class are arranged as a circle. One student stands up then the others sit, so no chair is empty.

2) The teacher asks to the student who is standing up, for example: "What is your teacher's name?",

3) While the standing student answer the teacher's question, the teacher says "change place, please!". Then, the other friends (sitting down) and standing student move fast to another chair. So, the student who does not get the chair will stand to wait for another question from the teacher and another chance to seat.

Conclusion

Teaching English for young Learners is interesting activities. Before teaching young learners, teacher should know the characteristics of young learners and the student's needs. Then the teacher can divide the method, the model or technic of teaching young learners. Teaching Young Learners should be interesting, happy, and attractive. The teacher can use colorful picture, song, and game. Those should be suitable for the children. Then every teacher of

young learners must be creative and always cheerful, because he/she face children. Every kinds of media, method, and technic can be improved by the teacher as creative as possible.

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