

The most suitable English learning methods for young learners

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article was to know the most suitable and effective methods to apply to young learners as elementary graders. The researcher got 17 female and male students. Their grade varied from class 1 to class 6. Before conducting this study, the problems faced by the students are they seemed to have difficulty memorizing English words, lacked motivation, and lacked concentration in learning English. There were 3 methods used in this study: Grammar Translation Method (GTM), Audio Lingual Method, Total Physical Response. The students were taught English once a week. The researcher observed the effectiveness of each method in each meeting. Those methods were used all together in each learning process. The finding showed that GTM was not effective to apply, while the two latter were good and effective to apply for those students.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, English is a foreign language that is not used in daily communication (Agustin, 2011 & Syahputra, 2014). This is certainly one of the obstacles for students to be able to memorize and understand English itself due to the lack of intensity in its use. Moreover, the government implemented the 2013 curriculum in which English lessons were eliminated for the elementary school level. Hanandyo (2020) states that the existence of English lessons is not discussed at all in SD in Permendikbud No. 67 of 2013 concerning the Elementary Curriculum, pages 9-10. Hanandyo (2020) stated that the omission of this could have a bad impact because teaching English for elementary students can be a provision for them to pursue higher education.

In addition, the provision of English learning for elementary school students is considered good because they are still at an age where it is very easy to receive and memorize language information. Megawati in Sushanti (2021) said that students experienced 3 obstacles in learning English, including pronunciation, vocabulary, and language structure. Before providing teaching methods to elementary school children, teachers must first know the character of children, in general, to make it easier to provide appropriate teaching methods. Rahmi (2021) states that late childhood lasts from the age of 6 years to the age of 12 years, this period is also known as the playing period with the characteristics of students starting to like leaving the house and entering peer groups which are marked by students already having and choosing friends to play. At this age, students are physically enabled to enter the world of games and have the drive and mental ability to understand concepts, logic, truth, and symbols that have certain meanings. From this, it can be concluded that children at elementary school age are in a physically and emotionally active phase.

According to Havighurst in Khaulani (2020), Unlike students who are in the lower class (PAUD) or the class above (high school and above), elementary school students have several tasks during their development period, including a. Learn the physical skills needed for common games b. Building a healthy attitude about oneself as a growing being c. Learn to adjust to friends his age d. Begins to develop appropriate male or female social roles e. Develop basic skills for reading, writing, and arithmetic f. Developing the necessary understandings for everyday life g. Develop conscience, moral understanding, order, and level of values h. Develop attitudes towards social groups and institutions i. Achieve personal freedom.

Unfortunately, the position of English as a foreign language creates some problems faced by the subjects of this study, such as they got difficulty memorizing English words, lacked motivation, and lack of concentration in learning English. Those problems seem understandable as they do not use English for their daily communication. Further, since Kormos (2008) stated that age considerably affects students' motivation, the researcher in this study wants to find it out.

From the mentioned problems, the researcher tries to find out the solution by applying 3 methods (Grammar Translation Method (GTM), Audio Lingual Method, Total Physical Response) in teaching the students to find the best and the most applicable of them. Besides, the researcher also tries to find out the method that can boost their motivation and enthusiasm.

2. METHOD

2.1 Subjects and objects of the study

This research was conducted outside of the classroom. Where all the different graders were taking the same English lesson. There were 17 elementary school students who actively participated in the activities held. All activity participants came from grade 1 to grade 6 SD. This English learning activity was carried out once a week at the weekend.

2.2 Data collection

During the research process, the researcher gave some themes. Those themes were delivered by using some mentioned methods (Grammar Translation Method (GTM), Audio Lingual Method Total Physical Response). Then, the researcher observed through some evaluation of the assignments given to get to know the most suitable methods to use in learning English for kids.

2.3 Theoretical frameworks

There are several terms used in this paper, they are:

- a. Grammar Translation Method (GTM)
GMT is a teaching method used in teaching grammar with the main characteristics that focus on translation and memorizing verb forms (Ambarwati, 2016).
- b. The Audiolingual Method
The audiolingual method is a method based on a structural approach in language teaching (Sardaniyah, 2019)
- c. The Total Physical Response (TPR) method
TPR is a method for teaching language to early childhood because its application relates to the coordination of commands, speech, and movements so that it is easier for a child to master a language in his learning. (Astutic, 2019)

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

In the community service activities carried out, the researcher tries to divide the class into two different levels, namely the upper class (grades 4-6) and the lower class (grades 1-3) to get better learning outcomes due to having a high-level background. education that is almost the same as one another. However, this could not be implemented due to time constraints. This English class activity can only be attended on Sundays which is the only free time for students. The existence of differences in different class backgrounds made researchers experience difficulties when giving explanations, but they could still be overcome. What the researcher did was to give longer time to students who belonged to small classes when they received lessons.

During the implementation of community service, researchers provided 3 methods, including Grammar Translation Method (GTM), Audio Lingual Method, and Total Physical Response (TPR). The three methods are not implemented separately. Of the three methods given, the results show that the GTM method still cannot provide maximum results to students, in contrast to the two Audio Lingual Methods and Total Physical Response (TPR). Students look more enthusiastic when they get lessons with the audio-lingual method. They enjoy listening as well as following or repeating what they hear. They also tend to remember the meaning of a word when they have to memorize words from a song, or from what they get from their teacher. In addition, when the TPR method was used, students looked enthusiastic because they could express the language they were learning with several movements. This method is one of the methods most preferred by students where they can enjoy and memorize English words more quickly.

3.2 Discussion

Of the three methods taken by researchers in this community service activity, the results of using the GTM method have different results from previous researchers. Ambarwati (2016) states that the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) method can increase students' interest in learning English. Whereas in this community service activity, the GTM method is less able to motivate students and is less able to make students quickly memorize words in English. For the audiolingual method, Sardiyannah (2019) states that the method has advantages in learning because it provides more practice and practice and listening and speaking activities, where students will be better at making sentences as has been exemplified. These results are the same as what was obtained by researchers in this community service activity. Researchers in community service activities also have similarities with Astutik (2017) who states that the use of TPR is the right method for teaching students to learn English because besides being able to teach material, this method can be used to invite interaction and daily communication.

The results of the study in this community service activity reveal contrasting findings regarding the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) compared to previous research. According to Ambarwati (2016), the GTM method can increase students' interest in learning English. However, in the context of this community service, the GTM method was found to be less effective in motivating students and helping them quickly memorize English words. This discrepancy highlights the importance of contextual factors in the effectiveness of teaching methods, suggesting that what works in one setting may not necessarily yield the same results in another.

In contrast, the audiolingual method has shown consistent benefits across different studies. Sardiyannah (2019) highlights the method's strengths in providing ample practice through listening and speaking activities, enabling students to construct sentences effectively based on modeled examples. These findings align with the observations from the community service activity, where the audiolingual method facilitated active engagement and improved sentence formation among students. The repetitive nature of this method seems to reinforce language structures and pronunciation, making it a reliable approach for young learners.

Moreover, the Total Physical Response (TPR) method continues to demonstrate its efficacy in teaching English to young learners. Astutik (2017) emphasizes that TPR is not only effective in delivering educational content but also in fostering interaction and everyday communication. The community service activity corroborated these findings, with TPR proving to be an engaging and interactive method that helps students internalize the language through physical activity and movement. This method's ability to combine language learning with physical response makes it particularly suitable for young learners who often benefit from kinesthetic learning experiences.

In conclusion, the choice of English learning methods for young learners should be contextually informed, taking into account the specific needs and preferences of the students. While the GTM method may have limited applicability in some contexts, the audiolingual method and TPR offer robust alternatives that encourage active participation and practical language use. Educators should consider these findings when designing their curriculum to ensure that their teaching methods are not only effective but also engaging and motivating for young learners.

4. CONCLUSION

From this study, it can be concluded that GMT is not too efficient to use for young learners. Some methods that can be more useful to improve students' English learning are AudioLingual Method and Total Physical Response (TPR). The use of those methods shows significant improvement in the student's English learning as in memorizing English words. Moreover, the students also look more active and enthusiastic during the class.

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