

A LITERATURE-BASED STUDY ON CREATIVE ENGLISH TEACHING APPROACHES FOR YOUNG LEARNERS

¹Hasbuna Nikmah Shalehah, ²Hesty Widiastuty

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Palangka Raya

Keywords:

Library research, English Language
Teaching (ELT), Young learners

***Correspondence Address:**

Email: hasbunanikmah26@gmail.com

Abstract: English language learning began to be taught to early childhood. In contrast to the way of teaching for teenagers and adults, the approach used to teach English to children must be adjustable so that learning becomes interesting and makes it easy for them to understand the material being taught. Many methods of teaching English are used for early childhood, and they must be creative and innovative. This study explores creative teaching approaches for English language education in elementary schools through literature-based methods. By analyzing existing studies, this study identifies effective strategies, including language play, storytelling, and the integration of songs and music. These methods not only increase students' motivation, but also improve their contextual mastery of the language. The study also highlights important factors that influence implementation, such as teacher readiness and cultural relevance, while also discussing the challenges educators face in implementing these innovative techniques. The findings aim to provide a comprehensive framework for teachers, policymakers, and education stakeholders to improve English teaching practices for young learners.

INTRODUCTION

Young learners have their own way of learning, they are creative and active so the way of teaching to them should be diverse and contain activities so that they do not get bored easily (Uysal & Yavuz, 2015). Similarly, teaching language learning to young learners, although there are advantages to learning a language at a young age, children tend to be quite difficult to accept learning about grammar compared to older people (Harley et al., 1995 in Uysal & Yavuz, 2015). Learning English at an early age provides many benefits that can enhance cognitive, linguistic and cultural development. Research shows that young learners have a “plastic brain”, which allows them to absorb and learn new languages more effectively. This not only promotes English fluency, but also affects their mother tongue skills and cognitive abilities (Trilestari et al., 2024; Kusic, 2022). According to Moon (2005), the benefits gained by children when learning a language since childhood are to increase children's confidence in language learning;

to help widen children's cultural horizon; to make children more aware of language phenomena. However, it should be remembered that language learning from an early age cannot be generalized to always be successful, sometimes we have to be realistic and realize that children have different understanding abilities from older people. Since it is young learners who are being taught this language, the learning approach should be diverse, interesting and creative to attract students' interest and motivation.

Innovative techniques in teaching English that have been practiced at Sunday School Jemaat Buntu Pasele Rantepao through Taula'bi' research (2022) are interactive games, using games such as Simon says can make learning vocabulary and grammar more fun and interesting. Using storytelling to help children connect emotionally with the language, through music and songs, utilizing technology such as educational apps, videos and interactive games, role-playing, and group discussions. And this has been proven to attract young learners. The use of narrative-based games has been shown to effectively change behavior, knowledge, and self-efficacy, as evidenced by a meta-analysis of 22 studies (Zhou et al., 2019). Game methods in children's English language learning foster higher levels of enjoyment and engagement compared to traditional methods, which can lead to better information recall (Jackson et al., 2018). Combining music and games in language learning for children increases vocabulary retention and makes learning fun (Octaberlina, 2023).

Many studies discuss creative methods such as language games, storytelling or songs separately, but there is rarely a literature review that brings the findings together to provide a comprehensive overview of the effectiveness of various methods. Most of the studies on creative methods were conducted in Western countries and thus lack the cultural side of the region, especially Indonesia. Some previous studies often focus on the success of creative methods without discussing in detail the challenges faced by teachers. Based on these gaps, this study can identify the many innovative methods used and describe the challenges faced to provide practical insights for teachers and policy makers.

This research contributes to teachers in the form of practical guidance on creative methods that have been proven effective, alternative strategies for teachers to teach their students, and an understanding of the challenges they will face so that they are better prepared for similar situations. Contributions are also made to policy makers for curriculum development, teacher training and resource allocation. This study has several main objectives, namely identifying creative methods in English language learning, revealing the challenges of

implementing creative methods and providing practical recommendations. To achieve these objectives, the research questions in this study are:

1. What are the creative methods used in teaching English to young learners?
2. What are the obstacles faced by teachers in implementing creative methods for English language teaching?

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a library research approach to explore creative English teaching methods for young learners. The methodology involves systematic analysis of existing academic resources such as journal articles to synthesize insights about effective strategies and their application in primary education. Library research is chosen to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic by analyzing secondary data from credible and relevant sources. This approach enables the researcher to identify patterns, themes, and gaps in existing literature. The data sources from peer-reviewed journal articles related to creative teaching methods in English language education. Data is collected through literature search by using academic databases such as Google Scholar and other credible repositories with specific keyword (*for example: creative learning methods for elementary students; teaching English creatively to children; innovative English teaching methods for young learners*). After that, the document will be reviewed to analyze selected sources to extract key findings and themes related to creative English teaching methods. The collected data is analyzed through thematic analysis by grouping information into themes such as types of creative methods, and implementation challenges. Synthesis by combining insights from various sources to answer the research questions and provide a holistic perspective.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. Effective ways to teach English to young learners

Based on several research articles that have been analyzed, there are several effective ways that can be used to teach English to young learners. The method proposed by Hashemi and Azizinezhad (2011) and Bidzilya (2023) is the use of Total Physical Response (TPR), a method that involves children in physical activities that correspond to the teacher's verbal commands, such as imitating certain movements or instructions. Then there are visual aids in learning such as toys or dolls that make learning more fun and easy to understand. Thematic planning, managing activities quickly and diversely

given children's short attention spans, supporting children's self-confidence and continuing to use English in the classroom.

Some learning alternatives that are quite widely used are using music, storytelling, games, technological media, and literary media such as drama (Hashemi & Azizinezhad, 2011; As, 2024; Buranova & Zoirova, 2024; Herman et al., 2022; Cremin et al., 2023; Saleh & Althaqafi, 2022; Wang & Kokotsaki, 2018; Behnamnia et al., 2020). There are also those who state that involving students actively in learning such as doing roleplay according to the material (Hashemi & Azizinezhad, 2011; Saleh & Althaqafi, 2022) can increase students' interest in learning English. Other creative approaches require collaboration between teachers and students that builds curiosity and problem solving for students (As, 2024; Cremin et al., 2023; Bidzilya, 2023; Saleh & Althaqafi, 2022; Wang & Kokotsaki, 2018), or through activities outside the classroom that use students' multisensory (Buranova & Zoirova, 2024) by giving them freedom in solving tasks that make them think creatively (Wang & Kokotsaki, 2018).

There are also approaches that use written works, teachers can ask their students to create writings or stories in the hope that they can learn a lot of vocabulary and grammar through their writing (Cremin et al., 2023; Yasir et al., 2021). In addition, approaches that use local culture are also an innovative way to attract young learners because they can learn English that is relatable and close to their daily lives (Hashemi & Azizinezhad, 2011; As, 2024).

b. Challenges faced in implementing creative learning for English language teaching

Although the innovative techniques that have been implemented have proven to be successful and can increase the interest of young learners to learn English, but of course as teachers there are many things that become their obstacles and challenges while implementing these innovative techniques. Differences in student characteristics; limitations in classroom management; limited teaching aids or interactive media needed; lack of training to teachers on innovative techniques; problems in time constraints; teachers' and parents' hesitant belief in experimenting with new and more innovative techniques; difficulties in keeping classroom activities interesting and relevant, this is also related to inadequate classroom environment, (Hashemi & Azizinezhad, 2011; As, 2024; Buranova & Zoirova, 2024; Yasir et al., 2021; Saleh & Althaqafi, 2022; Wang & Kokotsaki, 2018) are the most common problems and

challenges teachers encounter and experience while teaching innovative techniques for teaching English to young learners in the classroom.

In addition, fear of dependence on technology and constraints in integrating learning materials with local culture are also challenges experienced by teachers based on research conducted by As (2024). Meanwhile, Buranova and Zoirova (2024) added that children's attention span is quite short and their ability to integrate vocabulary gradually is a further obstacle experienced. Another problem was added by Wang & Kokotsaki (2018) who stated that curriculum limitations make it difficult for teachers to implement innovative steps in teaching English in the classroom.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

This research shows that various creative methods in teaching English to young learners such as the use of Total Physical Response (TPR), visual aids, games, music, storytelling, technology, drama, and local culture-based approaches, can increase students' interest, engagement, and learning outcomes. Strategies such as roleplay, student-teacher collaboration, multisensory activities and integration of written work have proven effective in supporting fun and relevant learning for students. However, the challenges in implementing these methods are significant. Teachers often face barriers such as differences in student characteristics, limited teaching aids, lack of training, time constraints and inadequate classroom environments. Other obstacles include dependence on technology, difficulty integrating local culture, curriculum limitations, and students' short attention spans. All these factors require attention to ensure the success of creative learning in the classroom.

This study provides recommendations for teachers to develop skills through training and workshops related to creative methods for English language teaching. Teachers can also utilize simple tools such as pictures, toys, or word cards to overcome the limitations of teaching aids. Teachers can also use thematic approaches to maintain students' interest and manage time more effectively. Recommendations given to schools include encouraging collaboration between teachers, parents and the community to create a supportive learning environment. Schools can also organize multisensory-based outdoor activities to enrich students' learning experiences. Meanwhile, future researchers can conduct more in-depth research on how to overcome barriers such as local cultural integration and students' attention span in creative learning, and develop

empirical studies to measure the effectiveness of certain creative methods on student learning outcomes quantitatively and qualitatively.

REFERENCES

- As, U. S. (2024). Improving Indonesian, Sundanese, and English language skills through creative learning methods in elementary schools. *Journal of primary school* 1(2), 8-12.
- Behnamnia, N., Kamsin, A., Ismail, M. A. B., Hayati, A. (2020). The effective components of creativity in digital game-based learning among young children: A case study. *Children and Youth Service Review* 116, 105227. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105227>
- Bidzilya, D. V. (2023). Creative ways of teaching English in the primary school.
- Buranova, M., Zoirova. S. (2024). Innovative methods of teaching English at pre-school. *JA Inkwell Publishing Conference Proceedings*. 109-111. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.2024/paka7z49>
- Cremin, T., Reedy, D., Bearne, E., Dombey, H. (2023). Teaching English creatively third edition. Routledge.
- Hashemi, M., Azizinezhad, M. (2011). Teaching English to children: A unique, challenging experience for teachers, effective teaching ideas. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences* 30, 2083-2087. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.10.405>
- Herman, Silalahi, D. E., Sinaga, Y. K. (2022). Collaborative teacher and students sebagai realisasi pembelajaran inovatif. *Indonesia Berdaya* 4(1), 267-272. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.47679/ib.2023408>
- Jackson, L. C., O'Mara, J., Moss, J., Jackson, A. C. (2018). A critical review of the effectiveness of narrative-driven digital educational games. *International Journal of Game-Based Learning* 8(4), 1-18. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJGBL.2018100103>
- Kusic, A. (2022). The effects of age factor on learning English: A case study of learning English in an online Chinese school. *MAP Social Sciences* 2(1), 1-9. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.53880/2744-2454.2022.2.1.1>
- Moon, J. (2005). In English. British council.
- Octaberlina, L. R. (2023). English for young learning method through games and songs for elementary school. *World Journal of English Language* 13(6), 203-210. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v13n6p203>

- Saleh, A. M., Althaqafi, A. S. A. (2022). The effect of using educational games as a tool in teaching English vocabulary to Arab young children: A quasi-experimental study in a kindergarten school in Saudi Arabia. *SAGE open* 12(1). Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221079806>
- Taula'bi', N. (2022). Creative teaching strategies implemented in teaching English to young language learner. *DIEKTIS Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra* 2(4), 529-534. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.53769/deiktis.v2i4.444>
- Trilestari, K., Manurung, R. M. L., Simangunsong, V. N. (2024). The benefits of learning English in early childhood: Positive and negative effect. *Esteem Journal of English Education Study Programme* 7(2), 669-681. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.31851/esteem.v7i2.16151>
- Uysal, N. D., Yavuz, F. (2015). Teaching English to very young learners. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 197, 19-22. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.07.042>
- Wang, L., Kokotsaki, D. (2018). Primary school teachers' conceptions of creativity in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in China. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2018.06.002>
- Yasir, G. M., Gondal, S., Salahuddin, A. (2021). The effective of creative writing for student at elementary level: A case study. *Research Journal of Social Sciences & Economics Review* 2(2), 133-145. Doi: [https://doi.org/10.36902/rjsser-vol2-iss2-2021\(133-145\)](https://doi.org/10.36902/rjsser-vol2-iss2-2021(133-145))
- Zhou, C., Occa, A., Kim, S., Morgan, S. (2019). A meta-analysis of narrative game-based interventions for promoting healthy behaviors. *Journal of Health Communication* 25(1), 54-65. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10810730.2019.1701586>