Introducing English in Preschool Through Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)

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ABSTRACT

This research is aimed to provide a detailed understanding of the implementation of Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) in English teaching at TK Islam Amalina South Tangerang. A qualitative analysis using the ethnography approach was used in the study. The data were gathered through observation, interview, and document review. Research indicates that the objective of the teaching and the method of teaching activities are both consistent with DAP best practices. However, some are not in agreement with the DAP. Furthermore, the topic of discussion was inconsistency. According to the findings of the study, the English teaching at TK Islam Amalina should (1) integrate the child development, subject matters, and language skills, (2) engage children in learning through play, and (3) involve children in learning by doing.

Keywords: *introduction, learning English, preschool*

INTRODUCTION

Language is the source of life and human strength. Therefore language needs to be studied and researched (Fromkin et al., 2013, p.3). The language also plays an important role in human life and it is impossible to express one's thoughts without human language. One of the language functions is as a means of communication. Human relations and communication are commonly described in both spoken and written languages.According to Brown (2000, p.5), language is a complex ability spontaneously developed by an individual without conscious or formal education, which is the same in each individual and the ability to process any information obtained. In communicating, language is a means of conveying thoughts, feelings, messages to others and understanding others' thoughts, feelings, and messages (Parera, 1993, p. 15). A person communicating with others is not limited to people with the same language but also others who have a different language. For that, we need a language that can be understood by both parties.

In the context of contemporary linguistics, the role of the universality of language cannot be separated from the acquisition of language. Due to the universal nature of the language, the child can learn any language. Therefore, we need to fully understand the concept of universality of languages so that we can understand how children acquire language. Some experts believe that babies born cannot speak until the first word is spoken. Before making the language sounds, the baby must first produce a variety of sounds, such as crying. Attempts and inclinations to prey upon these various sounds are something that is not learned (Steinberg 1993, p. 205).

Each child may develop his or her language structure based on their experiences at home and in their surroundings. In different contexts, each child has his or her level and style of expression. Each child has its personality traits or characteristics in language use. Because of their consistent and widespread experience, children's semantics continue to develop, which implies that schools play a significant role. New experiences demand the improvement of the child's semantic structure. Spontaneous and natural things will probably take place with any child in an attempt to process language acquisition. However, physical and psychological factors and the environment, particularly the family environment, have a great impact on the level of a child's language acquisition ability. In this case, the child's parent is either a false or important actor in the process of acquiring the child's language.

Preschool Children

Children of the twenty-first century will face challenges that have never been imagined before. In any aspect of life, things change rapidly. The skills and facts of pre-tech times will not be enough to prepare children for the future. Rapid and extensive changes require constant and careful adjustment. To prepare children for future challenges, we must educate them to be lifelong learners. Preschool programs are very important for today's children. This program is designed to prepare children to participate as active citizens in the new world.

Some children rely heavily on others to learn well, and other children are better if they learn themselves. Children learn at different speeds. A child often has a modality of premature sensory learning. This means he relies heavily on his sense of sight to gather information and decipher the world around him. Human development studies show that for the first nine years of life, children go through a series of universal and predictable growth and change. These predictable changes occur in all areas of development, including motor, cognitive, language, and art. The knowledge of typical development within the age range in this pre-school program offers a guide for teachers to use to prepare for learning environments and plan acceptable experiences (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009).

Physical/motor development is aimed to introduce and develop rough and smooth movements, to recall the ability to manage, control, and coordinate body movement. Besides, aims to improve body abilities and a healthy

lifestyle to support healthy, strong, and skilled physical development. Cognitive development is aimed to encourage learning acquisition, to find a variety of alternative solutions, to develop mathematical logic, space and time knowledge, sort-and-classification abilities, and to prepare for the development of careful thought. Language development is aimed to enable children to communicate effectively and encourage the children's interest in speaking Indonesian by expressing their thoughts properly in simple sentences. Art development is aimed to help children create something based on their imagination and to appreciate others' creativity.

Learning in Accordance with Child Developmental stage

Each child has a unique developmental pattern and timing, which is influenced by factors such as personality, learning style, and family background. Individual differences in children should be taken into account in both methodology and adult-child interaction. The interaction between the child's thinking and his experiences with teaching materials, ideas, and individuals contributes to the learning process. These experiences should be adjusted to the child's developing abilities while also motivating his or her interest and understanding (Bromley, 1997, p.2).

Preschoolers develop physically and psychologically in a unique way. It should adjust to children's needs. They need optimal physical and psychological development (cognitive, language, physical/motor, emotional/social, and arts). The teacher should be able to adapt the learning to the particular students' needs. In consequence, pre-school education is designed to meet the needs. Learning is directed to developing life skills. Life skills are developed holistically, whether through habituation or basic capability development. For example, the ability to do things that preschoolers can do, such as cut paper, cut and peel fruit, throw garbage in the proper place, and hang out with other children, is important for a child's future survival.

If classroom learning is not associated with developments, children will experience failure and frustration. Child-centered classes offer opportunities for success, not frustration. In this respect, the teacher should develop patterns of interaction between the different parties concerned when managing the learning activities. Teachers need to motivate students to be open, creative, responsive, and interactive in the learning process.

Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP)

DAP stands for Developmentally Appropriate Practices is an approach that emphasizes teaching and learning methods that are appropriate for a child's age, self-development, ability, talent, and interest. It is the fundamental knowledge that preschool teachers must possess regarding appropriate teaching and learning strategies for children (Masnan et al., 2019). The DAP concept established by NAEYC about 20 years ago refers to the early childhood planning philosophy suitable for children from birth up to the 8-year old age (Edwards, 2005; Ward & Wilcox-Herzog, 2019).

In the context of educational system, DAP is neither a curriculum nor a set of rigid standards dictating practice. It is a framework, a philosophy, or a method of working with young children instead. Preschool education that is developmentally appropriate is recognized in natural social studies, cultural values, and multiple languages, as well as an understanding of the needs for children to interact with their surroundings with minimal adult intervention, depending on their developmental stage. If children are given formal academic instruction, their cognitive and physical development will be incomplete, especially at the preschool stage, because children learn through play (Betawi & Jabbar, 2019).

For the past 20 years, NAEYC recommends two key commitments: (1) excellence and equity in early childhood education; and (2) Teachers have to understand the physical, social, emotional, linguistic, and cognitive development of children profoundly and influence them. Although one developmental milestone may be more prevalent than others from time to time, all developmental milestones for children are related, the role of children occurs holistically (Hegde & Hewett, 2020; Sakellariou & Rentzou, 2011; Suk Lee et al., 2006).

Second Language Acquisition in Preschoolers

Studying a second language is a very long and complex effort. Many factors influence and limit the effort needed to transfer the first language into new languages, cultures, ways of thinking, feelings, and deeds when studying this second language. Overall responsibility, physical involvement, intellectual and emotional are the responses required for the success of sending and receiving messages in a second language (Brown, 2000, p.1).

It seems to be a common belief that a child's first language has a significant influence on their ability to learn a second language This can be seen in the "foreign" accents in the second language speakers of the child. For example: if a Dutch child speaks English, then his English has accented Dutch, and if a child is Javanese speaks Padang, the Padang language is accented Java, and so on. The first language of the child also influences other languages such as vocabulary and grammar. Vocabulary is a key component of language mastery and provides many foundations for how learners speak, listen, read, and writing (Halimah & Izzah, 2020). While this may be less obvious, most learners and linguists accept the truth.

One of the major problems in second language research and teaching is the different experiences in the learning of a second language between children and adults. Children are generally "more" than adults in language learning (Brown, 2000, p.3).

The Purpose of Introducing English In Preschool

According to some theories, children who study English or a second language produce the correct sentence (grammar) because they receive positive reinforcement, whereas when they say something incorrectly, they receive negative reinforcement. This perspective implies that children who consistently use

incorrect grammar will soon realize their error and justify it, whereas children who consistently use correct grammar will be more motivated to learn again.

The introduction of English to preschool children has the primary objectives: (1) children can be creative, imaginative, and broad-minded; (2) children can develop language skills to face and make changes in themselves; (3) children can become critical thinkers and make decisions; (4) children can develop language skills to become problem solvers; and (5) children improve their language skills so that they are more concerned about their environment, society, and government.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to find out a comprehensive understanding of the purpose, children's activities, and the introduction of English in the Islamic TK Amalina Tangerang Selatan are concerned. Therefore, the method used is qualitative. According to Lincoln & Guba, (1993: 19), qualitative research increases the chances of a direct relationship between the researcher and the respondent as the research target. Thus the phenomenon described will be easier to understand than if the term was solely based on the researchers' opinions.

This study focuses on observing the natural setting in which children perform various activities in preschool, so the ethnographic approach is used. To obtain accurate data findings in this study, researchers used three data collection instruments or procedures, including observations, interviews, and documents. The student progress record, vocabulary list, learners quantity, and learning activities schedule are all included in this research document.

According to interview results, the current teaching objective in the Islamic TK Amalina Tangerang Selatan is based upon the principle of Neo-Humanistic Education. The purpose of education, according to its principle, is to develop each individual's potential so that he becomes a whole person. Learning helps children develop physically, cognitively, emotionally, and spiritually. Moreover, teaching that introduces children to the English language practices. A series of children's practices in the area of English introduction and learning can be classified as speech recognition, listening to stories, short dialogue, and singing.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION
Learning Objectives

Based on the data findings, it showed that TK Islam Amalina conducted the learning-by-doing curriculum while giving an introduction and learning English. The learning by doing curriculum is intended to aid students' physical, mental, and spiritual development in English learning mastery. Since, learning English through play is the most effective way to develop competence in line with the competencies of the curriculum, the teacher in TK Islam Amalina has brought students into a fun situation by using interesting and easy to follow strategies, methods, materials, and visual media.

According to children, playing is a creative process for exploring, learning new skills, and describing the world through symbols. Teachers play a critical role in the development of children's play (curriculum 2004, competency standards, p.4). According to the results of the

interviews at TK Islam Amalina, the school's learning objective is to maximize each student's potential so that they can develop as a whole person, which involves mental, physical, and spiritual activities. From the above description, the purpose of language learning in TK Islam Amalina is to develop the child in all aspects, including physical, cognitive, social-emotional, and spiritual development, as well as to introduce English. Thus, the English language can represent both an instrument and a purpose.

Children Learning Activities

Based on the research findings, Singing, listening, vocabulary, and short dialog activities are the main children's activities in the introduction and learning of English.

Singing

Based on the observation result, when children learn English vocabulary, students are instructed by the teacher to sing the song "My eyes, my ears, my nose, my mouth". The song is then performed with suitable body movements. The lyrics of the song are adapted to the topic and vocabulary discussed. For example, when they sing the names of the animals and the vegetables. They touch each part of the body according to the poem instructions. In the beginning, the teacher sometimes starts the rhythm slowly. This is done to prepare students for the readiness to sing.

Listening to Stories

To enrich students' English vocabulary, the teacher introduces flashcards of the animal image that the students have understood both body characteristics and vocabulary terms. The teacher shows a picture, and the student has to guess the picture in Bahasa. For example, a picture of a cat, then the students scream or answer together "kuciiing". After that, the teacher explained the correct answer the animal name to English "cat." With the introduction of English vocabulary through images that students have already understood, it will be easy for them to memorize the image in English. This kind of example is one of the easiest ways to introduce and learn English in preschool-age with vocabulary techniques.

Short Dialog

This technique is used to give an example of how a word can be pronounced. Based on the observation, the short dialog through the images (Flash Cards) is mostly a technique used by the teacher. First, the teacher shows the picture and asks the children, "What is it?" then they respond quickly to the picture. For example, the teacher shows a picture of ice cream, so when the teacher asked the students the form of the picture shown, the students answered "Ice Cream" together. After the students answer, the teacher then gathers a brief explanation in English and the students are asked to continue, such as "It Is (Teacher)......Ice Cream (Student)." This method is sometimes done by giving a little humor, such as teachers who pretend that they have difficulty taking a card and asking for help from children. This is going to make the child look interested. Since by this kind of fun way, the children look happy and the nature of curiosity is visible.

Discussion

Results have shown that the primary objective of learning in the TK Islam Amalina is to construct a whole human being. This means that the child's potential can be build or raised with activities that are relevant to the child's needs. These activities typically involve physical, mental, social, and emotional activities. Teaching English in the TK Islam Amalina is indeed paying attention to this aspect. Corresponding to the aim of teaching English, the interviews finding reveal that the primary objective is to introduce English. In this case, the child must be able to communicate in English. Some vocabulary has been introduced with that child and also how to pronounce the vocabulary. In other words, the purpose of learning English in the TK Islam Amalina is to introduce the child to the English media in all aspects of development: motor, cognitive, language, and art.

In general, when considered from its Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DPA) perspective, the purpose of the introduction and learning of English in the TK Islam Amalina is consistent with what Bredekamp has proposed. In the teaching and learning process, especially in the early stages, the child's needs are the main factor. The child learning activities should determine all the child's needs since they will be performed in the classroom. As Copple & Bredekamp (2009, p.3) and colleagues point out, we must focus on developing and learning children to meet their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical needs. As far as learning English is concerned, children should be engaged in non-separated language skills activities. Children need to learn the language in an integrated way. According to Pappas et al (2005, p.35), language integrity is an approach to learning and thinking that is relevant to all aspects of reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

From all the above descriptions, it is explained that learning English should be done in an integrated manner. Integration includes the integration of aspects of development, the integration of language skills, and integrity into the fields of scientific study. The results of the study explained that TK Islam Amalina's children carry out playing activities that include singing, listening to stories, vocabulary, short dialogue. In singing the content of a song, there is a poet who motivates him to guide and control his behavior. The child will have the pleasure of listening to the song and singing it. This technique is in line with what Hadi (2019) is saying. According to him, a child at the age of one year will play with the sounds in his mouth, that is, by tasting his lips, blowing his spit, and so on. Language noise plays not only occur in children one year of age but also in older children (bigger). For example, a child three years from now will love a song, short songs, and rhymes.

This kind of play is related to language development. Listening to the story is also one of the learning activities in the Islamic kindergarten of Amalina. The storytelling is performed by the teacher as one of the learning techniques. In the story, the teacher uses simple, short sentences, along with body movements that match what is said. The child can thus grasp the meaning of body movements. To understand the child's understanding, the teacher asks a couple of questions about the story. What is done by the TK Islam Amalina teacher following the opinion of Natasha (1995). She said that stories are an effective tool for teaching the language to children of early age.

Stories meet children's emotional and cognitive needs as well as other psychological needs. Besides, the story also encourages children to listen and talk. Teachers who tell children stories in a foreign language must adapt the text. Adaptation is needed concerning structures and criteria related to the child's interests. It is going to be easy to understand. That's why we need a "guided understanding" technique, which is a child's process of making meaning (Natasha, 1995, p.1-8) Imitating vocabulary greetings from teachers shown in flashcards is also used in the TK Islam Amalina. This is done concerning how spoken vocabulary is discussed. When viewed from the theory of this language following structural linguistics, using an audiolingual method, to be able to speak with words such as native speakers (native speakers). However, the introduction of vocabulary in TK Islam Amalina in English learning is modified by dialogs involving children. Short dialogue, therefore, has developed into the next learning.

The activities described above are classified as play activities. Play is a hallmark of activities children love. Playing can support physical development because they perform physical movements when playing. Playing also promotes intellectual development, because a little ability can be achieved when playing with children. Children's play reflects and supports the process of socialization and the development of thinking (Bronson, 1995, p.2). The activities described above shall not be carried out separately. This is consistent with the concept of integrated learning. In the same way, implementation is tailored to the circumstances of the child. For example, when learning vocabulary, children are invited to remember the image of flashcards and can continue to call the name in English. Not only does this play into the imagination of the child, but it is more likely to recall a stronger child.

CONCLUSION

The practice of education at the stage of development should be applied to all activities in pre-school age. This means that teachers make children things that need to be considered when determining all activities. Teachers who provide a level of child development will carry out activities that are appropriate to the child's developmental level and will support the growth and development of children in general, depending on the average age of students and an individual basis. The design of learning is adapted to the level of child development when it comes to the introduction of English. This is done for preschool education, which is to help children grow and develop in line with the level of growth and development that is not lost.

This study and discussion can be concluded, namely: the learning objectives and the introduction of English into the TK Islam Amalina have two aims. First, the development of all aspects of child development, physical, cognitive, social, emotional, spiritual, and the introduction of English. Children not only grow up physically and psychologically but also so that children know English as a foreign language. Thus, the learning objectives of the TK Islam Amalina do not contradict the principle of learning following the level of child development. The activities of the children of TK TK Islam Amalina children's activities include singing, vocabulary, listening to stories, and short dialogues. The activities referred to above are a type of activity suggested by early childhood and pre-

school education experts. The above things are done with full physical activity and play, which is the main requirement of children. English learning activities at TK Islam Amalina through several phases of learning, morning circle, core activities 1, rest, core activities 2, and closing. Pre-learning activities are carried out by welcoming children and welcoming them at the entrance when they come. Learning-level activities are carried out in TK Islam Amalina following the principles.

The activity of the morning circle following the principle of learning in line with the stage of development. This is because this activity is done in such a way that children have been happy since the beginning of the activity. This feeling of joy is essential to the continuity of the next activity. The introduction and repetition of the learned vocabulary are central to the activities. Teachers perform transition activities with singing and physical movements during their first core activity. This is done by moving from one activity to another. With the help of flashcards and other objects, the first core activities to introduce or repeat the concept have been learned.

This corresponds to the level of development of pre-school children. Next time, break. The teacher keeps accompanying the children during the breaks. The second core activity is the continuation of the break. Children learn English, and they also listen to stories. The way teachers tell stories is also tailored to children's development. The content of the story must be consistent with the power of reasoning and also with the ability of the student to think. The content of the story is an interesting story for preschoolers to keep up with the physical and psychological development of their students. In general, learning English in

the TK Islam Amalina is in line with the concept of educational practice and also with the level of Developmentally Of Appropriate Practice (DAP).

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