

PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS FOR TEACHING ENGLISH IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract. English is an international language. It is widely spoken by many people in the world. Countries that use English for communication in their nations are England, the United States, Australia, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, New Zealand, Singapore, Nigeria, and Ghana. English also used as communication in India, Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Guyana, dan Canada. English lessons in the 2013 curriculum at the SD/MI level are only extracurricular lessons, although it was finally revised again that English is taught as local content. However, in the independent curriculum which be implemented starting from the 2022/2023 school year, English is a compulsory subject that must be learnt by Elementary School students. Some of Madrasah Science Competition (KSM) questions are in English. These questions can't be understood by students because of inability to understand English. There are many problems in learning and teaching English, nevertheles there are many solutions. Therefore all school stake holders must prepare all things related to Teaching English to be succsesfull. This article is an observation of teaching English in MIN 3 Cilacap. The subject of observation is teachers and students in grade 5 in the 2022/2023 school year.

Keywords: Teaching English, Problems, Solutions.

INTRODUCTION

Based on historical records, English became an international language spread throughout the world through colonialism. But now the spread of English is no longer the result of migration or colonization, but includes various reasons, backgrounds and problems (Anita Dewi, 2022). English is commonly spoken in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, and the island nations of the Caribbean Sea and Pacific Ocean. English is also an official language in India, the Philippines, Singapore and countries in sub-Saharan Africa, including South Africa.

English is used as a language of communication in many countries. English is also used as the language of communication for United Nation countries. Teaching English in Indonesia has started after the period of Indonesian independence. Various curriculum and methods have been developed to improve students' ability to master English. However, the result is still not maximum. The proof is that students have not been able to communicate well in English (Listia & Kamal, 2022). English education at the elementary school level is very important so that students are able to be competent in the future. This is in line with the opinion of (Maili, 2018). There are

several reasons why English lessons need to be implemented at the elementary school level: first, students have the ability to continue to the next level of education without feeling surprised when they receive English lessons; secondly, the acceptance of English as a foreign language is more easily accepted by elementary school students; third, in the era of globalization there are many English terms and technology that require students to master them (Muharoni et al, 2022).

One of the obstacles faced in teaching English in elementary schools is the unavailability of a syllabus specifically for English subjects. The government, in this case the ministry of national education in the primary and secondary fields, does not provide an English language syllabus. The task is left entirely to each province to make its own syllabus according to the situation and conditions in the region. Another problem is the teaching methods and strategies by teachers that are not in accordance with student development (Listia and Kamal, 2022). The Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia since 2012 has organized Madrasah Science Competition (KSM) activities. This competition is attended by students from Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, Madrasah Tsanawiyah, and Madrasah Aliyah. This activity uses three languages, namely Indonesian language, Arabic, and English. From the researchers' observations it turned out that the students who took part in the activity were constrained in understanding English. This requires teachers to improve the quality of teaching English so that students can easily understand it.

MIN 3 Cilacap is an Islamic elementary school which is located in the village of Sikanco, Nusawungu sub-district, Cilacap district, Central Java province. From observations of local content learning activities, students prefer learning English to learning Javanese. This is because there is an assumption that the Javanese language lessons taught are Javanese in the Solo-Semarang dialect, not the Banyumas dialect. The students' interest in learning English as an international language is quite high, they are interested in learning English, however, several problems in learning English arise. Efforts to improve the quality of learning English should be done in various ways. One of the efforts is by increasing the ability of teachers to be able to teach English well. This is important thing because teachers who teach English do not have sufficient skills. Their background is not from English language education. Furthermore, support from parents also has an important role in this activity. Parents should give encouragement to their children to want to learn English well. Important thing that parents can do, for example, by accompanying their children while studying at home.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research used descriptive qualitative method. According to Jalaluddin Rakhmat, the qualitative descriptive method is very useful for generating several tentative theories. This research focuses on observation and natural setting. Researchers go directly to the field, acting as observers. The researcher makes behavioral categories, observes symptoms, and then records them in an observation book (the instrument is an observation guide). The researcher is not trying to manipulate the variable. (Rakhmat, 2002)

According to (Sugiyono, 2016), qualitative descriptive method is a research method based on the philosophy of postpositivism used to research on natural object conditions (as opposed to experiments) where the researcher is the key instrument. Data collection

techniques were carried out in a triangulation (combined) manner, data analysis was inductive/qualitative in nature, and the results of qualitative research emphasized meaning rather than generalization. Qualitative descriptive research aims to describe, describe, explain, explain and answer in more detail the problems to be studied by studying as much as possible an individual, a group or an event.

Researchers in collecting data carried out the observation process as suggested by (Creswell, 2018) as follows:

1. Enter the research site slowly to get to know the research environment and get the necessary information and then take notes as needed.
2. Researchers try to identify what and who will be observed, when and where and how long will make observations.
3. Researchers position themselves as researchers not as informants or research objects even though their observations are participatory.
4. Researchers use various observation patterns in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the existence of research sites.
5. Researchers use a recording device during the observation while the recording method was done in secret.
6. Not all things are recorded, but researchers consider what will be recorded.
7. Researchers do not intervene with participants but tend to be passive and let participants express their own perspectives loosely and freely.
8. After completing the observation, the researcher immediately left the field and then compiled the results of the observations so that they would not forget.

RESULT DAN DISCUSSION

The problems of teaching English at MI Negeri 3 Cilacap include:

1. Teachers who teach English are not English teachers who do not have good skills in English. These teachers have actually received English lessons at Junior High School, Senior High School, and even College/University. But indeed we have to admit in general the quality of learning English they get is still low quality.
2. The teacher does not communicate in English either orally or in writing. Actually, oral and written communication can be done by teachers and other teachers, by teachers and students, as well as by teachers and parents. The absence of communication in the form of conversation is the most dominant cause of failure in learning English. Most students who learn English are always constrained in pronunciation, vocabularies, and language structure (grammar). Furthermore, to overcome lazy students who learn English, the teacher must create a comfortable learning environment, diligently memorize vocabulary, get used to speaking English starting from daily conversations and practice it repeatedly so they get used to it (Susanthi, 2022).
3. Students feel embarrassed, afraid, and worried when they make mistakes in conversing in English. In fact, the easy way to master English as a foreign language is to speak it. This is in line with Slamet Haryanto who said that the best way to

learn English is to speak it (Haryanto, 2005).

4. Teaching English grammar is preferred, while speaking skills are set aside. This is also a problem because it causes students to be afraid of making mistakes in English grammar.
5. The lack of interesting learning media is also an obstacle in learning English at MIN 3 Cilacap.
6. The lack of reading books in English is also an inhibiting factor in teaching English at MIN 3 Cilacap.

These problems can be overcome with the following things:

1. English teachers who do not have basic English can take part in English language courses. In today's modern era it is very easy to take an English course. There are English Language Institutions that serve courses with distance or online programs. Teachers can also improve their English skills by following pages on Facebook or other online media guided by native English speakers. Through these activities teachers are guided to improve their abilities: listening, speaking, and writing skills.
2. Teachers must be willing to communicate using English without embarrassment. This can be done in class with the students or outside the class with parents at home. Communication through writing in English can be started from simple things via whatsapp group, telegram, or instagram.
3. An easy way to learn English is to speak it. So children should be encouraged to want to say and speak English in everyday life. They must have self-confidence, be brave, and not be afraid of being wrong. Give them an understanding that learning English requires courage to speak, don't be afraid to make mistakes, don't be afraid to be called arrogant.
4. Grammar is important, however increasing vocabulary and being willing to speak must be prioritized. As we can see, for example, elementary school students in lower grades learn Indonesian. They don't learn Indonesian grammar, but they learn to speak with a large vocabulary. After getting used to speaking and their language skills have increased, in the high class they are taught grammar of Indonesian.
5. The lack of interesting learning media should be overcome in various ways so that the quality of learning English can be improved. The media used in the teaching and learning process of English is very important to help condition the classroom situation to be more lively, interesting and not boring. The main role of the media in learning English is to stimulate students' minds and make it easier for students to understand the material presented by the teacher so as to help achieve the learning objectives that have been set (Telaumbanua, 2016).
6. English reading books can be obtained in bookstores. Teachers can add to the library collection by buying books in English for elementary school students. These books can be obtained by buying directly at bookstores or online using the Cash on Delivery (COD) system. Likewise, parents should complete their children's reading books in order to improve their literacy skills. Interest in reading is influenced by several things, including the condition of a comfortable place to read itself. In

addition, the collection of books is also one of the drivers of reading interest. The existence of a reading house in the middle of the community can also be a stimulus for children's interest in reading because it is a place that provides library services for children (Mustangin, 2018).

CONCLUSION

Actually, the students' interest in learning English at MIN 3 Cilacap is quite high. They are very enthusiastic when the teacher taught English in class. However, several obstacles also emerged. The solution for low teacher abilities in English is teachers actively participate in English training through English courses. Teachers should communicate in English with students, with other teachers, and with students' parents. This communication takes place within the school environment and outside the school. Teachers need to encourage students to communicate in English without embarrassment and worry. Remember that the best way to learn English is to speak it. Interesting English learning media must be fulfilled. Likewise, reading books in English must be fulfilled. If all these problems can be overcome, then the quality of learning English at MIN 3 Cilacap will increase. Of course it takes struggle and strong determination to do this.

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