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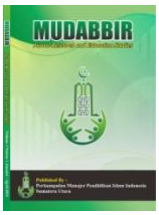

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Simple English Learning for Rural Elementary Students: A Community Service in Subur Village

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ABSTRAK

Program pengabdian masyarakat yang berjudul "Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris Sederhana untuk Siswa Sekolah Dasar di Daerah Pedesaan: Pengabdian di Desa Subur" ini dilaksanakan untuk mendukung pembelajaran bahasa Inggris sejak dini bagi anak-anak sekolah dasar di wilayah pedesaan yang memiliki keterbatasan akses terhadap sumber belajar bahasa. Melalui metode interaktif seperti permainan, lagu, bercerita, poster kosakata, dan proyek langsung, program ini bertujuan meningkatkan keterlibatan, motivasi, serta kemampuan dasar bahasa Inggris siswa. Kegiatan juga mencakup sesi membaca Al-Qur'an dan dukungan literasi dasar untuk memperkuat fondasi pendidikan anak secara menyeluruh. Hasil pelaksanaan menunjukkan respons positif dari para siswa yang antusias dan aktif selama kegiatan berlangsung. Integrasi microteaching dan pembuatan artefak turut memperkaya pengalaman belajar siswa dan pengalaman mengajar fasilitator. Inisiatif ini membuktikan bahwa pendekatan yang sederhana, menyenangkan, dan responsif secara budaya dapat secara signifikan meningkatkan hasil belajar bahasa bagi siswa pedesaan dan menumbuhkan kompetensi penting bagi perkembangan masa depan mereka.

Kata Kunci: *pengabdian masyarakat, pendidikan pedesaan, pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, pengajaran interaktif, siswa sekolah dasar, keterlibatan bahasa.*

ABSTRACT

This community service program, titled "Simple English Learning for Rural Elementary Students: A Community Service in Subur Village," was conducted to support early English education among elementary school children in rural areas with limited access to language learning resources. Through interactive methods such as games, songs, storytelling, vocabulary

posters, and hands-on projects, the program aimed to enhance students' engagement, motivation, and basic English skills. The program also included Qur'an reading sessions and basic literacy support to strengthen the children's overall educational foundation. The results showed a positive response from the students, who were enthusiastic and actively involved throughout the activities. The integration of microteaching and artefact creation further enriched both student learning and the teaching experience of the facilitators. This initiative proves that simple, joyful, and culturally responsive approaches can significantly improve language learning outcomes for rural students and foster essential competencies for their future development.
Keywords: *community service, rural education, English learning, interactive teaching, elementary students, language engagement.*

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, English has become a highly sought-after skill. English is an important international language to master because it plays a role in global communication, information, access, and opportunities to enhance career prospects. This is in line with the statement made by (Abimanto & Oktavia, 2023) English is an international language that must be mastered by experts, teachers, and students alike. Therefore, English language education in Indonesia has become a major focus in efforts to improve English language skills among students in the education sector.

However, in some rural areas, such as Subur Village, there are still many elementary school children who do not have adequate access to effective English language learning. English is an international language that must be mastered, especially in this day and age. This is in line with statement made by (Eberhard, Simons, & Fennig, 2021) that English occupies the top position as the most widely used language internationally and continues to be influential to this day, demonstrating that English proficiency is crucial, especially for the younger generation in the current era.

In this case, it is also supported by the fact that English is one of the subjects that has been included and is already part of the learning system in the Indonesian education sector, from elementary school to university. This aligns with the community service objectives carried out by Group 4 of the English Language Education Department, which aim to introduce English to children in Subur village and train them using simple methods such as songs, games, matching cards, and introducing everyday vocabulary. These methods are employed to adapt to the children's needs, creating effective and targeted learning experiences.

Thus, the community service activity "Simple English Learning for Rural Elementary Students: A Community Service in Subur Village" is expected to make a significant contribution to improving the English language skills of elementary school children in the village. Through simple and enjoyable learning methods, this activity is expected to help children in Subur Village improve their English language skills and have better opportunities for a bright future.

METHODOLOGY

This community service utilized a descriptive qualitative approach that emphasized active participation and the use of interactive learning techniques. The strategy was designed to involve the local population – especially primary school children – while ensuring that the learning experience remained enjoyable and meaningful.

The methodology was implemented through the following stages:

1. Preliminary Assessment and Planning

Prior to initiating the activities, our team carried out an informal field assessment by visiting the village and having open discussions with community leaders and school staff. These engagements helped us gather insight into the learning environment, available facilities, and students' exposure to English. The findings were then used as the foundation for organizing lesson content, arranging schedules, and selecting teaching tools that were both practical and relatable for the students.

2. Teaching Implementation and Informal Observation

Our teaching sessions took place in two main environments:

- At school, where we conducted structured classes following the formal learning atmosphere.
- At the basecamp (posko), where we ran open tutoring programs that welcomed children from various grade levels.

We adopted a fun learning method, prioritizing creativity and student engagement. Instead of applying a rigid classroom model, we designed sessions that revolved around playful games, collaborative quizzes, song-based activities, and speaking practices. This ensured that the children remained interested and motivated throughout each lesson.

During these interactions, we also observed students reactions and participation levels, noting how well they responded to certain techniques, so we could fine-tune our next approaches accordingly.

3. Integration of Language Visuals

To support passive learning, we created a series of language visual aids simple, attractive posters featuring vocabulary and common phrases in English. These visuals were displayed in areas easily seen by students in the class. The goal was to foster familiarity with the language through repeated visual exposure, helping students retain key words and expressions beyond class time.

4. Daily Review and Team Reflection

Each day concluded with a group reflection session, during which we exchanged feedback, identified challenges, celebrated small wins, and discussed ways to improve future activities. These daily evaluations were essential for maintaining the effectiveness of our program and also served as key documentation for our final report. They allowed the team to stay aligned, adaptive, and responsive to the learning needs of the students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As part of our community service program in Desa Subur, our group carried out various educational activities aimed at enriching the linguistic and religious understanding of local children. The program, spread over several days, consisted of multiple components: teaching English through informal lessons at our basecamp (les), conducting classroom-based sessions at the nearby elementary school, crafting and displaying linguistic artifacts, assisting children with Qur'an reading, and organizing

fun competitions.

Although each activity had its own unique challenges and methods, the following section will elaborate on all components of our community service program, including English lessons at the learning post, Qur'an reading sessions, classroom teaching, the creation of language artifacts, and fun competitions with the students.

Qur'an Reading and Basic Literacy

Each day at the learning post began with Qur'an reading sessions. These sessions served both spiritual and educational purposes. We sat side-by-side with the children, listened as they read from the Qur'an or Iqra books, and gently corrected their pronunciation. Many of them had already reached fluency in Qur'anic recitation, while others were still in the early stages, reading from Iqra. Despite these differences, all students showed strong commitment and eagerness to improve. This segment of our program not only strengthened their reading skills but also reinforced discipline and focus, as they were encouraged to read clearly and attentively.

On the second day, we expanded this segment to include basic Latin literacy, especially for younger children who had not yet mastered reading in the Roman alphabet. We introduced simple words, repeated phonics patterns, and helped them read short phrases aloud. This effort aimed to bridge gaps in both religious and academic literacy.

Teaching English at the basecamp

After the religious and basic literacy sessions, we shifted into our main academic focus: teaching English through fun and interactive lessons. Our goal was not to replicate a rigid classroom structure but rather to create an environment where children could enjoy learning English while engaging in games, songs, and friendly competitions.

We applied a star-point reward system across all three days of teaching. Every child who volunteered, answered questions, read aloud, or participated in games earned a star. At the end of the last day, we celebrated the three top performers with small gifts, making the learning process both rewarding and memorable.

As Rochmawan (2023) notes, "Game-based learning English has significant

potential in increasing student motivation and engagement, facilitating social interaction, and expanding understanding of vocabulary and grammar." Our experience mirrored this, as the children responded with joy, energy, and growing confidence each day.

Day 1: Storytelling and Reading Aloud

On the first day, we focused on storytelling. We began by reading simple English fairy tales aloud to the children with expressive gestures, varied tones, and colorful visuals. The students were then invited to try reading short passages themselves. This encouraged bravery in pronunciation and reading fluency. Those who volunteered were rewarded with stars, and we made sure everyone felt encouraged regardless of their level. This method helped to build confidence, comprehension, and listening skills.

Day 2: Learning the English Alphabet

The second day centered around learning the English alphabet with a focus on proper pronunciation an essential skill since many Indonesian learners tend to pronounce letters based on local phonetics. We emphasized repeating each letter with the correct sounds, used flashcards and games, and invited the children to spell their own names. Songs such as the "ABC Song" were sung together, reinforcing pronunciation in an enjoyable way. Sari & Lestaria (2023) emphasize that songs and music are powerful tools for embedding language patterns into young learners' memory

This day also included additional reading support, especially for students still struggling with basic alphabet recognition. For them, we personalized attention and guided reading practice, reinforcing our goal of inclusive and supportive education.

Day 3: Learning Colors Through Games and Songs

On the third day, we introduced colors in English. Rather than relying on printed media or toys, we played an improvisational game: we pointed to objects around the room and asked the children to guess the color in English. This "Guess the Color" game encouraged them to connect vocabulary to their surroundings.

We also sang songs about colors with great enthusiasm. While there was no dancing involved, the students sang with strong voices and high spirits, demonstrating their enjoyment and growing comfort with English vocabulary. Fauzi (2022) highlights that songs, chants, and movement-based activities not only increase retention but also foster confidence in shy learners.

Micro teaching

Teaching can be understood as an effort to create an environment that is conducive to the learning process. This environment is a system that includes various interconnected components, such as the learning objectives to be achieved, the material delivered, the interaction between teachers and students, and the availability of facilities and infrastructure that support teaching and learning activities. All of these elements must be designed and managed harmoniously so that the learning process can take place effectively, fun, and meaningfully for students.

Microteaching has an important role in encouraging teacher students to reflect on their teaching practices. This reflection process allows students to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of teaching, assess the strategies that have been implemented, and identify aspects that need to be improved. In this context, microteaching provides opportunities for students to observe and evaluate their performance as prospective teachers (Febriyana & Winarti, 2021). By critically evaluating their teaching activities, students can formulate better strategies for the future. Microteaching also opens up space for students to revise and improve the teaching methods that have been applied (Hafifa, Mulyadi, & Mulyani, 2022).

Teaching and learning activities carried out at Elementary School in Subur Village, Air Joman District, Asahan Regency, North Sumatra. Using fun learning methods involve several classes, including grades 5 and 6. Teaching activities are carried out for 3 days, namely on the first day of doing mengar activities, namely teaching simple tense and providing new vocabulary. The media used are whiteboards and markers. Before the activity started, students were taught several greetings and taught how to introduce themselves. Students are expected to be able to introduce themselves using a variety of simple English. The introduction of new vocabulary is taught in a fun way, namely by making it into a song so that students can easily

remember it. From the vocabulary provided, students are taught how to make simple sentences, namely with the simple tense form in English.

In addition, students are also given explanations and motivation to love themselves, and of course this explanation is related to the vocabulary and material taught. After that, students are assigned to create a mini project, which is to make a picture by listing their name and what they love about themselves. As a quiz, one of the students who dared to explain in front of his friends was given a prize as an appreciation.

On the second day, the material taught is in the form of the future tense and introduces vocabulary related to the mind. New vocabulary is explained by making it into a song and adding movements according to the meaning of the vocabulary so that students always have an easy time remembering it. After that, students are taught how to make future tense sentences from the vocabulary. And as a mini project assignment, students are taught how to make a vision board from the paper that has been given.

On the third day, the teacher taught the material about the past tense and gave several new word clues related to the material. After explaining the material, students were tested for understanding by making a game, where the teacher divided students into three groups, each group was given cards containing a picture and some cards containing a sentence, students were instructed to match cards that matched the picture. This aims to test the cohesiveness of students and their understanding of the material being taught.

From the results of the teaching, it can be seen that students are quite excited and happy with the learning process that has a game and is fun so that they are not bored in learning. In addition, there are several obstacles in the learning process, there are some students who make fun of or give ridicule to students who are brave or active in learning, this can cause a loss of enthusiasm in students who are lowered or make the student lose confidence.

Creating Artefacts

An artefact refers to a deliberately designed solution intended to address specific issues within a particular context. It is created by individuals with practical goals in mind and undergoes testing to ensure it effectively responds to critical challenges. The

purpose is to link the artefact to innovative pedagogical approaches. Several scholars have proposed definitions for innovative learning practices (Cropley & Cropley, 2010; Kelchtermans, 2009). In this study, artefacts are metaphorically viewed as tools for "sense-making" within the realm of innovative learning. The development of innovative learning practices is seen as the outcome of the interaction between artefacts and the sense-making process, where solutions must fulfill task requirements by being appropriate and practically useful within the learning context (Park et al., 2013). Artefacts provide learners with guidance and support, contributing to a more effective learning experience and helping them reach their objectives. Evaluating the usability of artefacts in educational settings includes an assessment of their structure and functionality, which are seen as critical components.

This artifact-making activity is carried out deliberately and aims for students to remember the results of what they have learned while at school. The artifacts made are in the form of vocabulary hangers that have been learned during the learning process. With this artifact, students will always see and remember the learning. In addition, the making of this artifact also aims to build creativity and cohesiveness of students in the process of making it.

The creation of artifacts as a result of the classroom learning process Is an innovative method to help students pour their understanding of the subject matter into a tangible or visual form. The artifacts can be in the form of works such as posters, mockups, infographics, writings, or other forms of creative expression that represent the core of learning. Through this process, students are invited to reorganize information, relate various concepts, and hone critical and deep thinking skills.

This activity aims to strengthen students' understanding through an active and constructive learning experience. In addition, students are given space to interpret learning personally, because they not only receive the material, but also process and re-convey it according to their own style and way. This has a positive impact on increasing the spirit of learning and helps to remember the material more effectively.

On the other hand, this activity also has additional benefits such as encouraging creativity, communication skills, and collaboration, especially if done in a team. For educators, student-generated artifacts can serve as an alternative assessment tool that reflects students' understanding more thoroughly. Thus, this activity supports

academic development while equipping students with important competencies that are relevant in today's global era.

Children's competition

Play and learning are important aspects of children's development at an early age (Mutiah, 2015). Therefore, parents and the surrounding community need to provide a space that allows children to express these activities. Responses to children's cheerfulness and enthusiasm need to be given positively. Adults, especially parents, play an important role in creating a supportive environment, where children can not only play happily, but also learn through fun and meaningful activities.

In the initial process of service before carrying out activities in Subur Village, Air Joman District, Asahan Regency, North Sumatra, we saw many village children playing around the school and the streets. However, they just wander around and lack the learning process. This made us think of making activities that involve children, with the aim of being a learning process and a fun space for village children. We make a competition for children as our activity program during the service. In addition, it is also to foster a sense of togetherness with the children in the Subur Village, Air Joman District, Asahan Regency, North Sumatra and make the children cheerful. So we decided to make the race smart, careful and guess the style. The competition activities were held at our coordination post at 14.00 until it was finished.

The first competition Is the smart and careful competition. In this Competition we divide children according to their age or grade level. This smart and meticulous Loma is a competition where children will think and hone or repeat the lessons they have learned. In this competition, children are given two red and yellow cards, namely red means for wrong answers and yellow cards for correct answers. In this competition, meteka is required to keep his eyes closed so as not to follow the answers of other friends. The committee in the inj competition gives the questions and answers and the children have to guess whether the answer is correct or wrong, and have to raise the cards according to their answers. In this competition, they quite understand the instructions given and they are quite happy with this competition because it makes

them not afraid and does not need to answer the teraoi, they just need to raise the cards according to their answers.

The second Is a style guessing competition. In this competition, we divided the children who attended into several groups. This style guessing competition is that they line up according to their group and the first person will be whispered a word that should be made into a style and the other person will imitate that style and the last friend will have to answer the style made by his friend. This race is quite funny and makes children think and test the cohesiveness of their movements.

The competition activities held were very enough to make them cheerful and learn. Even though this is a sevuah race, they don't feel sad because there are no winners in this race. And as an appreciation for having participated in this competition activity, we give small prizes to each participant so that they stay enthusiastic and always feel cheerful.

CONCLUSION

This community service program titled "Simple English Learning for Rural Elementary Students: A Community Service in Subur Village" has shown that introducing English through interactive, enjoyable methods—such as games, songs, storytelling, and visual aids—can effectively support language development among rural students. In addition to English learning, the program incorporated Qur'an reading, basic literacy sessions, and competitions to create a more holistic and engaging educational experience. These activities not only built students' vocabulary and confidence but also nurtured discipline, creativity, and a sense of community among the participants.

The involvement of microteaching and artefact creation helped future educators refine their teaching strategies while providing students with memorable, hands-on learning experiences. Despite minor challenges, such as peer teasing, the overall response from students was positive, enthusiastic, and full of growth. This program reflects the importance of culturally responsive and innovative approaches in community-based education and emphasizes the potential impact of simple yet thoughtful learning methods on young learners in underserved areas.

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