Promoting of English Fun Class (EFC) in Teaching English at SDN Balowerti 2 Kediri

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ABSTRACT

This research focuses on the activities of the English Fun Class (EFC) in teaching English. This research employs a qualitative research approach with the aim of describing the activities of teaching English to young learners through fun learning in the English Fun Class program. Data collection techniques include observation, interviews, and documentation, and the results are explained through activities of English Fun Class (EFC) from planning, implementation, and evaluation. The research was conducted at SDN Balowerti 2 Kediri from August to early December 2023. The research subjects included the English teacher and upper-grade students, namely 29 students from grade 5 and 19 students from grade 6. The results showed that English fun class (EFC) is effective in helping students learn English. Students feel pleasant with the lessons, showing enthusiasm and being active in the teaching-learning process. This research also highlights the step-by-step strategy of English fun class (EFC) for integrating media such as mini vocabulary books, picture cards, ice-breaking, English videos, and short movie scripts for the project short movie. This program is also a service activity organized by MBKM (Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka) as part of the Kampus Mengajar program in the field of education in Indonesia.

KEYWORDS: *Learning english, teaching english, young learners, English fun class (EFC)*

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Education is a crucial process for personal and societal development, offering various advantages in modern society. It encompasses both theoretical and practical knowledge, which are essential for future success and understanding of life (Saehu et al., 2020). Education serves as a competitive advantage for businesses, enhancing labor productivity, innovation, and overall company performance (Kharchenko, 2023). This explains that learning activities have a very positive impact on students, allowing them to gain new experiences as knowledge within themselves. The essential concept is that students have the right to learn, develop their potential, and solve life's problems.

Learning English in education is a complex and diverse process that occurs in various contexts worldwide, both through formal schooling and community interactions (Monaghan & Mayor, 2007). The concept of learning English encompasses various aspects, including self-concept, metaphorical conceptualizations, and self-assessment. Self-concept plays a crucial role in English learning, helping students overcome initial difficulties and build confidence (Muhammad, 2017). The learning process is viewed as a collaborative, social activity where children develop linguistic structures to perform social acts (Mayor, 2020). In reality, many obstacles are found in learning English, where students often struggle and find it difficult to understand English learning materials. Based on this, students

in grades 5 and 6 often face difficulties in learning English, especially in understanding, reading, listening, and writing.

Teaching English as a second language requires effective methodologies and techniques. Teaching English to young learners requires special approaches due to their unique characteristics (Juhana, 2014). Teaching approaches for young second language learners differ from those used for adults, necessitating specialized pedagogical strategies and materials (Oliver & Nguyen, 2018). Successful TEYL involves understanding how children learn and develop in English, considering individual differences, and implementing age-appropriate tasks and assessments (Nikolov & Djigunović, 2019). In many elementary schools, especially in upper grades, English is included in the curriculum either as a local content subject or extracurricular. English is taught at the elementary level as a foundation for higher education. Additionally, comprehending young learners' characteristics is essential for creating suitable lessons and achieving successful learning outcomes (Juhana, 2014).

When the researcher conducted the Kampus Mengajar Batch 6 at SDN Balowerti 2 Kediri, they encountered challenges while teaching English. The students experienced difficulties in reading and understanding, even after the researcher provided explanations. Some of them attempted to read new words but still struggled to pronounce them correctly. Others often had trouble remembering new words. A few tended to have shorter attention spans, which caused them to quickly lose interest in vocabulary exercises, making it harder for them to learn new words thoroughly. These challenges could diminish their confidence, making them less willing to learn English. The acquisition of English by young children is viewed as a collaborative, social activity where they learn to use linguistic structures to achieve specific goals (Mayor, 2020). Therefore, the introduction of English Fun Class (EFC), which teaches English using enjoyable learning methods, can help students regain their enthusiasm and actively engage in learning English. One of the media used by the researcher to teach English to young learners is providing the English Fun Class (EFC) with various engaging materials. Therefore, this research aims to describe the activities of the English Fun Class in learning English for 5th and 6th-grade students at SDN Balowerti 2 Kediri.

2.0   LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   LEARNING ENGLISH

English language learning in elementary education reveals mixed perspectives. While some studies suggest that early exposure to English can enhance proficiency and motivation in later years (Shizuka, 2007), others argue that maturity level is crucial for effective language acquisition (Angraini Hardi & Marleni, 2020). In Indonesia, elementary English education has undergone significant changes, with current policies making it an extracurricular subject (Zein, 2016). Despite this, Indonesia ranks second globally in the number of children learning English at the elementary level (Zein, 2016). To improve English language learning, multimedia- based interventions have been widely explored, particularly for reading, writing, and vocabulary skills.

2.2   TEACHING ENGLISH

Teaching English is a multifaceted process that involves both art and technique. English teachers are viewed as artists who employ various strategies to communicate with and educate their students (Khansir, 2014). Being ability to communicate in an engaging and articulate way is essential when teaching English to speakers of other languages. Teaching English as a second or foreign language presents various challenges for educators. Effective inyoung learner

struction requires clear and simple instructions, repetition, and patience, especially for beginners (Mammadova, 2021). Overall, teaching English as a second language plays a crucial role in promoting global communication and cultural exchange (Dilsado, 2024).

2.3 YOUNG LEARNER

A young learner is defined as a youngster between the ages of 6 and 12 who is enrolled in their first six years of formal education. Younger students are more prone to boredom. Starting English education early is advantageous as children are in their "golden age" with sharp memory (Maskhurin, 2023). The teaching of English to young learners is a complex and rapidly growing field worldwide, particularly in East Asia (Butler, 2015). Teachers should be aware of children's shorter attention spans and energy levels when planning lessons (Avezova, 2022). However, many teachers feel unprepared for this task, lacking sufficient pre-service and in-service training (Al Malihi, 2015). Effective teaching of young learners requires understanding their developmental stages and applying appropriate methods and materials (Sukarno, 2012). Teachers express a need for training in technology use, teaching strategies, and materials design specific to young learners (Al Malihi, 2015).

2.4 ENGLISH FUN CLASS (EFC)

The English Fun Class (EFC) is an English-language program designed to improve students' English skills and knowledge in the four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The name of the program means learning English through fun and interactive activities in the classroom. Fun can be promoted through engaging methods like English camps for elementary school students in Indonesia (Rachmawati et al., 2020). Harahap et al. (2021) emphasize that "fun English" can help students develop ideas, attitudes, and communication skills in English in a way that does not burden them. This program is implemented to makes students enthusiastic and fluent in learning English. A comprehensive model suggests that fun can be defined as any positive emotion experienced in relation to an activity, associated with seven factors: safety, playfulness, novelty, autonomy, immersion, social connection, and purpose (Stacey, 2023). This multifaceted understanding of fun can help guide future research and improve its application in various contexts. The English Fun Class (EFC) program also received support from the headmaster and the English teacher at SDN Balowerti 2. The final product of this program will be a short film featuring the 5th and 6th-grade students.

3.0 METHOD

This research uses the qualitative research method to describe the activities of the English Fun Class (EFC) as a teaching english program. According to Imalia Dewi Asih (2005), in qualitative research, the interpretation of phenomena involves efforts to understand and describe the experiences

individuals have in their daily lives. This approach explains phenomena and data observed by the researcher which is explained through the activities of planning, implementation, and evaluation. Frechtling (2007) stated program planning, implementation, and evaluation are interconnected processes in effective program management. This research was conducted at SDN Balowerti 2 Kediri from August 14 to December 1, 2023. The researcher chose this school as a form of service within the Kampus Mengajar 6. The subjects of this research include the English teacher and students dari Tingkat kelas tinggi yaitu grade 5 and grade 6. In this research, the researcher has the role of a teacher who teaches an English fun class (EFC) in learning English to young learners. Data collection techniques involved classroom observation during English lessons for grades 5 and 6, interviews with the English teacher, and documentation such as photo, videos and field notes.

4.0   FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on observations, interviews, and documentation, the research findings indicate that the implementation of the English Fun Class (EFC) in English language learning at SDN Balowerti 2 Kediri for grades 5 and 6 includes an opening activity, core activities, and closing activities. To make the learning process enjoyable, the EFC utilizes various media and materials, such as picture cards, mini vocabulary books, ice-breaking activities, English videos, and short movie scripts for creating English short films. However, planning is essential before conducting the English Fun Class (EFC). Lesson planning is a crucial aspect of effective English language teaching. Teachers prepare by reviewing competencies, selecting resources and methods, and setting goals (Emiliasari, 2019). Implementing mini- lesson plans can improve teacher readiness, professionalism, and student retention (Abdulloh, 2018).

The preparation of materials for the English Fun Class (EFC) included several supporting media to be used for grades 5 and 6. The media used in the implementation of the EFC comprised concrete and digital resources. The preparation of materials and media for the EFC was standardized between grades 5 and 6 since these are upper grades. The media and materials prepared included:

- Picture Cards

Picture cards have been shown to be an effective tool for improving vocabulary acquisition across various age groups and learning contexts (Saripah, 2022). This media consists of illustrated cards that contain various vocabulary words in English. The types of vocabulary taught include body parts, food, and drinks. The picture cards were created using the Canva application. The researcher selected 20 images relevant to the teaching theme, arranged and edited them in Canva, adding vocabulary labels at the bottom of each image. Once completed, the images were printed.

- Mini Vocabulary Book

The mini vocabulary book is a small-sized book that serves as a mini dictionary containing the vocabulary taught in the English Fun Class (EFC). Soveren (2013) suggests using mini vocabulary lessons to enhance student recall. To support vocabulary acquisition, resources like the Oxford English Mini Dictionary (Buxton, 2013). The front page of this mini book includes the student's full

name, class, and cartoon stickers, while subsequent pages feature the alphabet from A-Z. The mini vocabulary book is made from an F4-sized white paper, creatively folded into a compact book that can easily fit into students' uniform pockets. Cartoon stickers are attached to the front and back of the mini book to make it more appealing. The function of the mini vocabulary book is to serve as a writing medium for students during the EFC.

- Ice Breaking

Ice-breaking activities are also prepared to encourage students in their English Fun Class (EFC) learning. Ice-breaking techniques have been shown to significantly enhance student engagement and learning outcomes in various educational settings (Rahmawati et al., 2023). The ice-breaking activities vary, but in this EFC, the ice-breaking theme aligns with the vocabulary lesson from the picture cards. For instance, when teaching vocabulary related to "parts of the body," the ice-breaking activity used is the song "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes."

- English Video

English videos are shown to motivate and inspire students to learn English. Using English video materials in language learning can be highly beneficial. Studies have shown significant improvements in listening comprehension when using videos compared to traditional audio-only methods (Kamarullah et al., 2018). The English videos used in the EFC include subtitles in both English and Indonesian. After watching the video, students are asked oral questions about the content, such as identifying the main character, antagonist, protagonist, and setting. Snacks are provided as a reward for students who answer correctly.

- Short movie Script

The short movie script is organized to prepare for the creation of a short movie in English as the final project of the English Fun Class. Collaborative video projects can promote vocabulary learning, participation, and create interactive learning environments (Abdulrahman & Basalama, 2019). The teacher acts as the director for this short movie project. The theme of the short movie in the EFC at SDN Balowerti 2 Kediri is "Reducing Plastic Waste," which was proposed by the English teacher. The short movie script includes an opening narration, dialogues from the main and supporting characters, and closing narration. The cast comprises students from grades 5 and 6. Preparation for the short movie also includes equipment needed for filming, such as a camera, tripod, and editing applications like CapCut, along with location scouting for the shoot. Once everything is ready, rehearsal for reading the script and acting according to the storyline takes place during break times and after school. Filming occurs in the final week before the campus teaching program concludes.

The implementation of the English Fun Class (EFC) consists of opening activities, core activities, and closing activities, held once a week on Mondays and divided into several meetings. According to Pratiwi & Syahriani (2020), regular English meetings can significantly enhance language learning. Weekly English meetings provide opportunities for students to practice and improve their language skills, vocabulary, and confidence. The steps involved in the implementation of the English Fun Class (EFC) are as follows:

1. Meetings 1 – 3 (Picture Cards)
   - Opening Activities:

a. At the beginning of the English lesson, the teacher opens the class with an English instruction for a group prayer before starting the lesson.

b. The teacher calls students' names one by one for attendance, instructing them to respond with "present/absent/sick."

- Core Activities:

c. In this activity, students display media in the form of picture cards containing vocabulary related to body parts. Students are instructed to pay attention to each picture card.

d. Afterwards, students are taught how to read each vocabulary word related to body parts and are asked to carefully imitate the pronunciation. After practicing, students are given the opportunity to read the vocabulary independently to assess their reading ability in English. Once done, the teacher explains the meaning of each vocabulary word in Indonesian for better understanding.

e. Students record all the vocabulary they have learned in their individual mini vocabulary books. This book contains pages arranged with the letters A-Z. It is important for students to determine the initial letter of each vocabulary word. They are then asked to match the initial letter of the vocabulary word with the corresponding page in the mini vocabulary book along with the meaning of the word. For example, "Head=kepala" means that this vocabulary must be placed on the page with the letter H.

f. Next, students are given an ice-breaking activity related to body parts. This ice-breaking session is titled "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes." The teacher can write the lyrics on the board and demonstrate the accompanying movements to the students. The activity can be repeated until students are engaged and enjoying themselves.

- Closing Activities:

g. In the closing activity, students are asked questions regarding the meanings of each body part vocabulary in both English and Indonesian. If students answer correctly, they receive snacks as a form of appreciation from the teacher.

h. After everything is completed, the teacher ends the class by motivating students to learn English and then closes the lesson in English.

For meetings 2 and 3, the lesson on picture cards follows similar steps as meeting 1, but the content focuses on different themes, such as food, drinks, and transportation. The ice-breaking activities should also align with the taught material. With varied themes, the vocabulary collected in the mini vocabulary books will be extensive.

2. Meetings 4 and 5 (Watching English Videos)
- Opening Activities:

a. At the beginning of the English lesson, the teacher opens the class with an English instruction for a group prayer before starting the lesson.

b. The teacher calls students' names one by one for attendance, instructing them to respond with "present/absent/sick."

c. Students are then instructed to prepare for the lesson, which will involve watching an English video.

d. The teacher prepares a laptop, projector, and speakers to present the English video.

- Core Activities:

e. In this session, the teacher instructs students to write down vocabulary from the English video as it plays. The vocabulary can be seen through the provided subtitles.

f. The teacher starts playing the English video for the students.

g. The teacher ensures that students remain quiet while the video is playing.

h. After the video ends, students are asked to show the vocabulary they noted while watching.

i. Students are then asked to read each vocabulary word they obtained, translating it and inquiring about pronunciation.

- Closing Activities:

j. In the closing activity, the teacher asks students about the conclusions or meanings implied in the English video. Students are also asked questions regarding the characters, plot, and setting of the video before concluding the lesson. If students answer well, they receive snacks as a form of appreciation from the teacher.

k. After everything is completed, the teacher ends the class by motivating students to learn English and then closes the lesson in English.

3. Meetings 6 and 7 (Creating a Short Movie)

In meeting 6, the teacher focuses on discussing and training students in acting and speaking English. In meeting 7, the teacher begins filming according to the short movie script that has been created, followed by editing the raw video using a video editing application.

- Opening Activities:

a. At the beginning of the preparation for creating the short movie, the teacher opens the class with an English instruction for a group prayer before starting the lesson.

b. The teacher calls students' names one by one for attendance, instructing them to respond with "present/absent/sick."

c. The teacher discusses and explains the theme of the short movie to be created together.

d. The teacher selects the main and supporting characters from students in grades 5 and 6, while those not chosen will serve as extras in the short movie.

e. The teacher informs students about the schedule for rehearsals and filming.

- Core Activities:

f. The teacher, acting as the director, trains students in grades 5 and 6 to read the short movie script and act according to it.

g. The teacher guides students to improvise movements and speaking styles in English to help them feel comfortable and not pressured.

h. The teacher begins filming scene by scene.

i. The teacher and students evaluate the performances after filming.

j. Once filming is complete, the teacher can transfer the raw video to an editing application for processing.

k. During the editing process, the raw footage must be arranged according to the storyline, and then the video is edited as desired.

l. After the editing process is complete, the video can be shown to students and uploaded to social media.

- Closing Activities:
    m. In the closing activity, the teacher asks students about the conclusions or meanings implied in their own short movie. Additionally, students are asked questions regarding the characters, plot, and setting of the short movie before the lesson concludes. If students answer well, they receive snacks as a form of appreciation from the teacher.
    n. After everything is completed, the teacher ends the class by motivating students to learn English and then closes the lesson in English.

As an evaluation Based on the implementation and process of teaching the English Fun Class (EFC), it is evident that the learning experience was smooth and effective. Students in grades 5 and 6 enjoyed participating in the EFC because the English lessons employed creative media, such as the decorative mini vocabulary books that are easy to carry, enjoyable ice-breaking activities, and the engaging process of creating a short movie. Students demonstrated interest in acting in English, as shown by their daily practice of reading English dialogue scripts. The researcher documented the EFC activities through photos and videos and provided reflection sheets for students to express their feelings, impressions, and messages about the English learning experience. The series of activities in the English Fun Class (EFC) at SDN Balowerti 2 Kediri showed results that enthusiasm and joy among students during lessons, along with positive feedback expressed in their reflection sheets. Additionally, the support from the English subject teacher contributed to the success of the EFC. Therefore, the English Fun Class can make English learning more enjoyable and engaging for students, facilitating easier mastery and understanding of the language.

5.0   CONCLUSION

The research found that teaching English through the English Fun Class (EFC) can help young learners in their English language acquisition. It makes learning English enjoyable and easier to understand. By using concrete and digital media, teachers can create a fun learning environment. Resources such as the mini vocabulary book encourage students to collect new vocabulary, while ice-breaking activities keep students motivated and cheerful during lessons. Moreover, the use of these media fosters an active classroom atmosphere and reduces boredom in learning English. In conclusion, the English Fun Class (EFC) is a useful method for teaching English to teachers and also supports young learners in learning english.

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