

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING: STRATEGY TO PREPARE PROFESSIONAL ENGLISH TEACHERS IN 'TEYL' SUBJECT AT UNIVERSITY OF NUSANTARA PGRI KEDIRI

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ABSTRACT

The English Department at University Nusantara PGRI Kediri is one of the institutions that trains prospective English teachers. Students are offered various courses that prepare them to become professional English teachers. One of the subjects that prepares graduates for this role is Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL). This research aims to describe the materials used in the subject, the projects students create, and the steps involved in making these projects within the TEYL course. The research employs qualitative methods, involving the lecturer and a select group of students as subjects. Data collection techniques include observations, interviews, and document analysis. The findings show that the materials cover the theoretical basics of TEYL and practical activities. The projects students develop include creating educational videos, stories for children, and lesson plans implemented at schools. The project development steps involve students formulating questions, designing the products, creating detailed schedules for each project stage, and presenting and evaluating their work. The study concludes that the learning experiences designed by the lecturer effectively prepare future teacher candidates in TEYL.

Keywords: Instructional Materials, Student Project, Steps of Creating Project, TEYL

ABSTRAK

Jurusan Sastra Inggris Universitas Nusantara PGRI Kediri merupakan institusi yang mendidik calon guru Bahasa Inggris. Mahasiswa ditawarkan berbagai mata kuliah yang mempersiapkan mereka menjadi guru Bahasa Inggris profesional. Salah satu mata kuliah yang mempersiapkan lulusan untuk peran ini adalah Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL). Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan materi perkuliahan, proyek yang dibuat mahasiswa, dan langkah-langkah yang terlibat dalam pembuatan proyek-proyek tersebut dalam mata kuliah TEYL. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif, dengan melibatkan dosen dan beberapa mahasiswa sebagai subjek. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi observasi, wawancara, dan analisis dokumen. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa materi tersebut mencakup landasan teori TEYL dan kegiatan praktis. Proyek yang dikembangkan oleh mahasiswa meliputi pembuatan video edukasi, cerita untuk anak-anak, dan rencana pembelajaran yang diterapkan di sekolah. Langkah-langkah dalam pengembangan proyek meliputi mahasiswa merumuskan pertanyaan, merancang produk, membuat jadwal terperinci untuk setiap tahap proyek, serta mempresentasikan dan mengevaluasi pekerjaan mereka. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa pengalaman belajar yang dirancang oleh dosen secara efektif mempersiapkan calon guru masa depan dalam TEYL.

Kata Kunci: Materi Pembelajaran, Proyek Siswa, Langkah-Langkah Pembuatan Proyek, TEYL

INTRODUCTION

Higher education in Indonesia is obligated to provide education, research, and community service, as mandated by the National Education System (2003). To ensure the quality of education in higher education, the curriculum must be designed by the standards outlined in the Indonesian National Qualifications Framework (KKNI). In the context of higher education, learning must begin by determining the graduate profile outlined in the Graduate Learning Outcomes (CPL). The goal of the higher education curriculum is to produce graduates with competencies aligned with the Graduate Competency Standards (SKL) stipulated in the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 3 of 2020. One program currently receiving significant attention in the education sector is Teaching English for Young Learners (TEYL), which focuses on teaching English to the younger generation. The role of English as an international language is increasingly important in various countries, including Indonesia.

Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) has attracted significant attention, especially the role of English as a lingua franca worldwide. Due to government regulations, more children are learning English at a younger age without full literacy in their first language. Therefore, the last few years have witnessed an increase in the amount of literature on TEYL focusing on various aspects such as pedagogy (Garton & Tekin, 2022), policy (Enever, 2016), use of technology (Cowie & Sakui, 2020), and Theory for young learners (YL) (Garton & Copland, 2019; Pinter, 2017). This is given to TEYL in both educational and academic contexts. The advancements in TEYL make it essential to educate prospective teachers efficiently and equip them with the necessary pedagogical and management skills. Based on the above resources, providing valuable insights for YL teachers, gaining experience in a real classroom environment is undoubtedly the most valuable and effective way to do so. At this point, offering practicums that become professional teachers would be a good solution for them to gain an idea of the classroom environment. Given the importance of practicums in professional teacher Education (Collinson et al., 2009; Lawson et al., 2015; Yildirim & Orsdemir, 2019), a practicum project is initiated, aiming to explore the impact of practicum-integrated TEYL Education, where professional teachers can gain experience and become more aware of working with YL and their unique characteristics.

Based on the explanation above, teachers' roles are very diverse. Teachers also play a crucial role in shaping the future and face these challenges by being flexible, creative, and proactive in developing relevant and effective learning methods. To be effective in teaching, teachers must develop various skills such as communication, technology, classroom management, creativity, and pedagogy. Therefore, the role of teachers becomes increasingly important in equipping students with relevant skills for the future. (Inovatif,

2024). Teachers need to acquire these skills to enhance their effectiveness and guide students in the wise and productive use of technology.

To achieve graduate competency standards, the lecturer must be able to follow the rules that are determined for prospective teachers. She must also know about the curriculum used in each subject. So, the lecturer can provide the best in the teaching and learning process. In an Education program at a university, the teaching faculty helps prospective teachers in the future. The English Language Education Program at University Nusantara PGRI Kediri is one of the institutions that prepares prospective teachers. Students are provided with various subjects that prepare them to become professional English teachers. One of the subjects that prepares graduates to become professional English teachers is Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL).

Based on observation, when the researcher attended the subject, she found that the lecturer provided various learning activities. She learned from the teaching preparation of these subjects that the goal is for young learners to reach specific objectives. The lecturer applied a teaching model aligned with SKL. During the TEYL subject, the researcher experienced a range of learning activities, including understanding TEYL theory, training in selecting multiple learning activities, developing materials, preparing lessons, and practicing teaching in schools with elementary students. There were also activities where students worked in groups to create projects, such as making videos about children's songs, writing simple short stories, and practicing teaching at an elementary school. All activities were conducted using Project-Based Learning (PjBL).

PjBL is an instructional approach in which students learn by being actively involved in real-world projects. PjBL can improve critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills (Fauziati, 2014). As students solve problems, PjBL fosters 21st-century collaboration and communication skills and students' interest in learning (Bell, 2010). Projects in PjBL require students to engage in inquiry, solution-building, and collaboration to help solve problems. In implementing PjBL, there is a teacher who will help them. The teacher is here as a facilitator or project manager, and students are encouraged to decide how best to do their work. PjBL is a learning strategy that empowers learners to pursue their content knowledge and demonstrate their understanding through various modes of presentation.

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) projects provided invaluable hands-on experience for students in designing and implementing learning activities tailored to their needs. Furthermore, the application of PjBL also enabled students to work in groups, developing creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving in real-world situations. This demonstrated that PjBL is highly effective in preparing students to become professional English teachers. Previous research also demonstrated that the use of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in teaching English at various levels of education is highly beneficial for

developing 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration (Voogt & Roblin, 2010). PjBL allows students to work on projects that are relevant to their real lives, making learning more meaningful and easier to apply in the workplace. Dewey (1986) emphasized that relevant and meaningful learning will increase students' learning motivation.

In this research, the researcher focuses on implementing Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) in the classroom. It covers the materials and methods the lecturer uses to prepare the students to become professional teachers. Based on the research problem above, the objectives of this research are: 1) to identify the material taught by the TEYL lecturer to prepare English professional teachers for young learners at the University Nusantara PGRI Kediri; 2) to identify projects made by the students in the TEYL subject at the University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri; and 3) to describe the steps taken by the students in creating the projects in the TEYL subject at the University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research employed a qualitative research approach, aiming to explore the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in preparing students to become professional English teachers in the Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) program. The case study method was applied, focusing on a specific group of students and their experiences during the sixth semester at the University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri.

Data Collection was carried out through several methods:

1. Conducted interviews with five students and the TEYL lecturer to gain insight into their perspectives on the subject structure, materials, and methods employed.
2. Observations of the teaching and learning process within the TEYL subject will provide firsthand insights into the effectiveness of the PjBL method and students' participation.
3. Document Review involving lesson plans, student-created materials (videos, stories, and games), and feedback on projects produced during the subject.

Data Analysis was performed in three stages:

- Data Reduction: Filtering relevant information related to the research questions.
- Data Presentation: Using descriptive methods to present the findings from the observations, interviews, and documentation.
- Conclusion Drawing: Forming credible conclusions by cross-referencing the gathered data with established educational theories and practices.

Research Location: The research was conducted at the University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri in Indonesia, where the TEYL subject was implemented as part of the curriculum for English Education students.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Description of Research Subjects

This research was conducted in the English Language Education Study Program, Nusantara PGRI University, Kediri, focusing on the Teaching English for Young Learners (TEYL) subject. This subject is taught in the sixth semester and covers various aspects related to teaching English to children. This research involved students enrolled in this subject and the lecturer. Observations were conducted over one semester, with interviews with student and lecturer representatives to explore the teaching process.

B. Research Findings

The findings of this research were obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data collected included the material taught in the TEYL subject, the projects completed by students, and the steps involved in completing those projects.

1. Materials

The TEYL subject is designed to train students in understanding the principles of child-friendly English learning, as well as the skills to develop teaching materials and select appropriate learning activities. The material presented in this subject covers various topics, such as the characteristics of young learners, the principles of child-friendly English learning, and the application of these principles in the classroom or through learning videos.

a. Language Acquisition

Students are provided with material related to the basic theories of language acquisition in children. This is crucial for them to understand the process of second language development in children. The theories taught include First Language Acquisition Theory, Critical Period Theory, Behaviorism Theory, and Interactionism Theory. This material teaches students to understand how children learn language, from imitating adult speech to interacting with their surroundings.

b. Principles of Child-Friendly English Learning

This learning principle focuses on adapting English instruction to suit children's needs, so they feel engaged and comfortable while learning. This includes the use of fun activities, such as playing and singing, that can be adapted to the diverse characteristics of children. This learning aims to optimally develop children's cognitive and affective abilities.

c. Total Physical Response (TPR)

One method taught is Total Physical Response (TPR), which involves physical movement to teach English. Students are trained to teach using this method, where they associate words with appropriate physical movements to

reinforce student understanding. For example, students will perform movements that correspond to the spoken word, such as hanging their hands for the word "monkey" or forming their hands into a trunk for the word "elephant."

d. Teaching Practice

Students are trained to create simple lesson plans and teaching modules used to teach elementary school children. The purpose of this material is to enable students to plan lessons, including determining the theme, objectives, and steps needed to teach English to children.

2. Projects

In the TEYL subject, students are required to work on various projects to apply the skills they have learned in class. Some of these projects include:

a. Making Videos

One of the main projects is creating learning videos that teach English through songs and movements. Students are asked to choose a theme, such as animals, and create videos that combine words with movements that children can perform. These videos are used in classroom learning, where students learn through visuals and audio that support their learning.

b. Stories

Students are also asked to write simple stories that are easy for children to understand. This story tells of friendship between animals, which is expected to help children understand English. This story is also used to teach vocabulary and sentence structure in a fun and engaging way.

c. Games

Students are asked to design games that can be used to teach English skills to children. These games are designed to be fun and interactive, such as word guessing games or movement games, which can help children retain the vocabulary they have learned.

d. Teaching Practice

As part of their final project, students apply what they have learned in the classroom by teaching in an elementary school. They create lesson plans and teach the prepared materials to children. This activity aims to provide a hands-on experience in teaching.

3. Steps of Creating a Project

a. Question Formulation or Project Development

Students begin the project by formulating a question or selecting a project to work on, such as creating a teaching module, writing a story, making a video, or designing a game.

b. Designing a project plan as a real step

After selecting a project, students are asked to develop a project plan that includes objectives, materials, and the steps needed to complete the project. This plan allows students to structure the learning and teaching process.

c. Making a Schedule

Students are also asked to create a detailed schedule for each stage of the project. This schedule is important so that students can manage their time well and complete the project on time. This teaches students the importance of time management in teaching.

d. Presentation and Evaluation

After completing the project, students present their work to the class. This presentation aims not only to showcase the work but also to obtain feedback from lecturers and classmates. Evaluation is conducted to measure the extent to which the project achieves its stated objectives and whether the material taught is well received by students.

C. Discussion

In Project-Based Learning (PjBL), students learn to design learning modules, lesson plans, and assessments, preparing them for real-world classroom challenges. As Vygotsky (1978) proposed in his Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory, the most effective learning occurs when students are in an environment that supports their development, both theoretically and practically. This allows students to experience firsthand the challenges teachers face and prepares them for more realistic situations.

In these activities, students not only acquire theoretical knowledge but also apply it to real-life situations. One example is when they create teaching modules that include learning objectives, teaching materials, and effective assessment strategies. These projects provide opportunities for students to design interactive and engaging teaching materials for children while also focusing on their skills in designing motivating activities. Students also learn important skills such as classroom management and managing student behavior. Through hands-on experience teaching in schools, they learn how to handle various situations and adapt teaching techniques to meet the diverse learning needs of children. In addition, students are allowed to use learning tools, such as educational videos, games, and stories, which actively engage children and enhance their understanding of the material.

Total Physical Response (TPR) is one method students implement in their project. TPR combines physical movement with English words or phrases, making it easier for children to remember and understand the vocabulary taught. This is highly relevant to Gardner's Theory (2020), which states that children learn best through physical and social engagement.

This research demonstrates the importance of applying language acquisition theory in the context of teaching English to children. Theories such as behaviorism, interactionism, and child-friendly learning principles form the basis for teaching that is more developmentally appropriate. The application of PjBL in this project provides students with the opportunity to directly apply these theories through practical projects, enabling them to design more effective learning materials. Piaget (2020), in his cognitive theory, also

emphasized that children learn through direct experiences that engage them physically and socially. The TPR project allows students to teach English vocabulary to children using fun physical movements, thereby improving their understanding of English vocabulary.

Cooperative learning is a crucial aspect of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) and is emphasized in this study. Students work in groups, share ideas, and provide and receive constructive feedback. Johnson (1999) states that cooperative learning enriches the learning experience, broadens horizons, and enhances students' understanding. These projects allow students to collaborate in designing and implementing learning materials and receive valuable feedback to improve the quality of their work.

Evaluation is a crucial step in Project-Based Learning (PjBL), allowing students to analyze and improve the quality of their projects. Gagne's design emphasizes that evaluation is an integral part of any learning process. In this study, evaluations were conducted after each project, allowing students to present their work and receive feedback from their peers and instructors. This evaluation process helped students improve their projects and hone the reflective skills necessary for the teaching profession.

This study shows that the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) has a positive impact on the development of students' skills in teaching English to children. These projects not only help students understand language acquisition theory and teaching techniques but also enable them to implement their knowledge in projects relevant to the children's needs. By using the TPR method, educational games, and stories, students learn to design engaging and effective teaching materials.

Furthermore, PjBL helps students develop classroom management skills, as well as skills in designing and implementing engaging and interactive learning tools. Through evaluation and feedback, students can also improve the quality of their projects and prepare themselves to become more creative and competent teachers. This research also supports Dewey's (2020) view on the importance of hands-on experience in learning. By directly engaging in teaching and developing teaching materials, students gain not only theoretical knowledge but also practical experience, which is crucial for their careers in education.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that the TEYL subject in the sixth semester at UNP Kediri helps students become professional English teachers for young learners. The findings can be summarized to cover instructional materials, project work, and steps for using PjBL. First, the material taught focuses on preparing prospective professional English teachers, incorporating both theoretical and practical approaches. Theoretical

materials include first language acquisition theories (Critical Period Theory, Behaviorism Theory, and Interactionism Theory), Language Acquisition, and Principles of Child-Friendly English Learning. The practical materials taught encompass material development, TPR, teaching various skills, lesson planning, and real teaching practice.

The projects created in the TEYL subject included developing short stories, designing games to teach language skills, and conducting teaching practice. The students had to craft their own stories on one page, which featured a brief text in English along with illustrations to aid in the students' understanding. The second project involved creating a language game aimed at teaching specific skills. Students were required to outline the language focus, rules, and steps. They also needed to provide the necessary teaching materials. The final project consisted of teaching practice at an elementary school, where they had to prepare and implement their lesson in a real classroom.

Furthermore, the PjBL steps are implemented to train students to become professional future English teachers, ensuring they not only master the theory but also apply it in practical contexts related to children's education. The following steps are taken: students are asked to formulate questions or compile projects related to simple teaching modules that assist prospective teachers in presenting material more systematically and in a way that is easily understood by children. The second step involves students designing and executing an animal-themed video production project to enhance their teaching skills. The third step requires students to create a detailed schedule for each project stage, which is a crucial aspect of project-based learning (PjBL). The fourth step involves students presenting and evaluating their work.

Finally, the researcher suggests that other researchers are encouraged to conduct further studies focusing on the effectiveness of different teaching methodologies for young learners, particularly in non-native contexts. It would be beneficial to explore how cultural factors influence language acquisition and to consider how teachers can effectively incorporate these aspects into their teaching practices. The researchers can also investigate the role of technology in teaching English to young learners, exploring both its benefits and limitations

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