

Investigating Teaching Strategy in English Online Learning for Elementary Students

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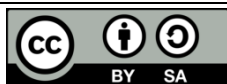
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Abstract.

The study focused on investigating the teaching strategy used by an English teacher in teaching Elementary students through online learning. Teaching young learners needs creativity to keep the students active and enthusiastic about learning. Especially the condition required to conduct online learning. Teachers should keep the students motivated and understand the material easily. This study also elaborated on the challenges that the teacher faced during online learning. A qualitative method was used in this study. The data collection techniques are observation and interview. The data was gained from an elementary school in Surabaya. The observation was held in the first grade for twelve meetings. The result showed that the teacher used two learning models during online learning. It was synchronous and asynchronous learning. In synchronous learning, the teacher used Listen and Repeat, Listen and Do, Short Conversation, Question and Answer, Quiz and Sing and Move. Meanwhile, in Asynchronous learning, the teacher used three strategies. They were Role play, Daily Tests, and Video Blogs (Vlogs). Moreover, the teacher also admitted that she faced challenges during teaching through online learning. The challenges came from the teacher herself, the students, and the parents.



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A. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, there is a growing tendency among Indonesian people to introduce English to their children in early age. It can be seen from the massiveness of daycares, international schools, and informal institutions which used English as a medium of instruction for Young learners. It is because of globalization demand that English become an international language (Limbong, 2017). Also, Young learners are in the golden age where they can learn anything easily, especially

language (Limbong, 2017). Those can be the main reasons why most parents want their children to be able to speak English at a young age. Moreover, the government makes English to be the local content in Indonesian elementary schools. Therefore, all Young learners in Indonesia will be introduced to English at least in the first grade of elementary school.

Teaching a new language to young learners is different from teaching it to adults. It is not as simple as delivering the material or

setting them up in the classroom. Teachers need more energy, spirit, creativity, and sensitivity in teaching Young learners. It is because they have a short attention span where Young learners (first graders) can only focus for 7 minutes (Asprilia et al., 2020). That amount of time is short for them to learn. Therefore, teachers must make the lessons fun, lively, and interesting (Imaniah & Nargis, 2017). So that students can enjoy, be active, enthusiastic, and motivated in learning English. The more excited the students are, the easier for them to learn (Pratiwi et al., 2021). Furthermore, as stated by Sukarno (2012) English teachers in elementary schools need a theoretical basis for teaching and learning English to young learners. If teachers know a theory about teaching English to young learners, they will be able to design materials, teach well, and suggest what methods, techniques, and approaches to use. It is why strategy in teaching Young learners should be considered well.

English teachers in formal schools not only deliver material but also should design the strategy for their students. Even though the curriculum was designed by the government, teachers are free to make the teaching strategy for the students (Yani, 2016). A teaching strategy is a method used by teachers for helping students learn. There are many teaching strategies applied by teachers in teaching English. However, not all strategies can be applied to Young learners. Aside from their attention span, the way they learn is different from adults. There are some

considerations in choosing the strategy for Young learners. They will easier understand the material which has pictures, audio, or video. Also, they are easy to remember a new language through physical movement or objects around them. Therefore, teachers should adjust their strategies in teaching based on their characteristics.

However, a face-to-face classroom which is usually conducted in the classroom should transmit to online classes due to COVID-19. This is the condition where it is not an option anymore but an obligation. Without questioning teachers' readiness in conducting online learning, they are obliged to teach through technology. Moreover, studying at home has several impacts, including causing boredom and reducing work motivation (Sutarto et al., 2020). It is a challenge for teachers who teach an elementary school. As stated by Khusna (2020) in her research that online learning makes it difficult in teaching English to Young learners because they don't have physical interaction with the teachers. It also will be difficult to keep their focus on the teaching process during online learning. Moreover, through online learning, the English teacher in this study was still required to improve the students' English skills according to the curriculum. Meanwhile, the teacher was struggling to teach the first Grader because of their nature. The teacher should creatively design the strategy for them, so that they can easily understand the material through online learning. Therefore, from this

case, it is important to investigate the strategy used by an English teacher in teaching elementary students in online learning.

To sum up, this study aims to answer two research questions. They are; 1) What are the teaching strategies used by the English teacher for Elementary students in online learning? 2) What are the challenges faced by the English teacher in teaching Elementary students in online learning?. Moreover, Studies related to teaching strategies used to teach Young learners had widely studied by previous researchers. A previous study showed that teaching strategies used by teachers in online learning can increase students' motivation (Sutarto et al., 2020). Each teacher has a different strategy for teaching Young learners. Lestari (2019) found 16 kinds of strategy used in teaching English in primary schools in Yogyakarta. Pratiwi et al., (2021) found nine kinds of strategy used in private primary school. However, those teaching strategies were applied in the offline classroom. Meanwhile, the focus of this study is the strategy used by a teacher in teaching elementary students in online learning.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted in one of the elementary schools in Surabaya. The school has one class in each grade. The researcher observed the first grade. It was because the focus of the participant is the young learners. The school has an English teacher for teaching the first grade to sixth grade. In each meeting, every teacher should

record the teaching process for documentation. The focus of the research was on the teaching and learning process of the English class. It is concerned with the strategy used by the teacher in teaching English to Young learners during online learning. How the teacher managed the class to keep the students active, enthusiastic, and not bored in an online class is interesting to research. Therefore, qualitative research is used to take and analyze the data. As stated by Brier & lia dwi jayanti (2020), it is used for a broad explanation of behavior, attitude, and phenomenon.

There are two research questions in this study. The first question used observation as a data collection technique. Observation is the most important research method used for qualitative study. The type of observation is non-participant where the researcher did not involve in the observation (Ciesielska, 2018). The researcher took twelve meetings during the teaching process. As mentioned by Ciesielska, (2018) that observation may take several weeks or years depending on what is being studied. Moreover, this study used methodological triangulation because the researcher needs more explanation about the data. It is the use of several data collection methods such as observation and interview. It also functions for enriching the research and giving more confidence in research findings (Noble & Heale, 2019). The second research question used interviews. It is appropriate to gain the data for the second research question

because it asked about people's opinions (Ary: 2010).

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teaching Strategy Used by English Teacher for Elementary students in Online learning

Based on the data, there were two models of learning that the teacher used in online learning during the pandemic. They were synchronous and asynchronous learning. Synchronous learning is where the teacher and students gather in one platform to have an

interactive classroom (Amiti, 2020). The teacher applied this method because young learner still needs guidance in learning. This was the way to make them disciplined and easily understand the material. Meanwhile, Asynchronous learning is when the teacher gives the material in form of audio/video, PowerPoint, or article to the students in flexible time. It made the students more time and maximize in doing the task. The teacher used a variety of applications during online learning. They are Zoom, Microsoft 365, Quizziz, Youtube, WhatsApp, and Video.

Table 1. The teaching strategy used for Young learners in Online Learning

Learning models	Teaching strategy	Technology
Synchronous Learning	Listen and Repeat	Zoom & Microsoft 365 (Sway)
	Listen and Do	Zoom & Microsoft 365 (Sway)
	Short Conversation	Zoom
	Question and Answer	Zoom
	Quiz	Zoom & Quizziz
	Sing and Move	Zoom & Youtube
Asynchronous Learning	Role play	WhatsApp & Video
	Daily test	WhatsApp & Microsoft 365 (Forms)
	Video blog (Vlog)	WhatsApp & Video

In synchronous learning, the teacher used Zoom platform as the main media. By using this application, the teacher can communicate directly with all the students. As mentioned by Risma (2021), Zoom is a communication media using video which can be used through mobile phones or computers. Zoom also has many features to support online learning such as share screen, whiteboard, and chat room. Not only Zoom, but the teacher also used various media such as Microsoft 365, Quizziz, and Youtube. The media used depends on the teaching strategy.

The teacher applied many strategies using different media during online learning. The most frequent strategy used is *Listen and Repeat*. Firstly, the teacher provides pictures and vocabulary in Sway Microsoft 365. She used the feature *screen share* in Zoom platform to share the material. The teacher asked the students to guess what the picture is, and the teacher pronounce the word and asks the students to repeat it after her. The teacher usually repeats a vocabulary many times so that the students understand how to read and what it means through the picture provided. This strategy was often used by the teacher to

introduce vocabulary. Based on Zainollah (2016), teaching with pictures intends to capture young learners' attention and concentration. Moreover, listen and repeat is the same as drilling which is an effective way to teach vocabulary (Fransiska & Jurianto, 2016).

The second strategy applied in synchronous learning was *Listen and do*. It was usually applied in certain materials like parts of body and daily activity. As with the first strategy, the teacher provides pictures and vocabulary in *Sway Microsoft 365*. Then the teacher pronounced and demonstrated it. All the students should listen and do what the teacher did. Through Zoom room, the teacher can monitor students' activity so that the teacher can make sure all the students follow the instruction. According to Zainollah (2016), children like activity which involves physical or movement. With this strategy, they will easily remember the vocabulary because young learners learn and understand the language from their eyes, hand, and ears (Scott & Yetreberg). Besides that, physical activities relieve their boredom with online learning.

The next strategy used by the teacher was a *short conversation*. This strategy was used to teach speaking. After introducing vocabulary using the strategies above, the teacher asked the students to apply it in a short conversation. Firstly, the teacher gave the example of a short conversation with another teacher directly in front of the Zoom camera. The example was below,

Teacher 1 : What is it?

Teacher 2 : it is an apple.

The teacher repeated the conversation many times so that the students can easily remember the words. The teacher then appointed every two students to practice a short conversation with the picture provided. This strategy aims to increase the student's confidence and speaking skill. Indeed, according to Sumarkina (2018), a short conversation can be able to improve the students' speaking skills. Moreover, this strategy can be categorized to cooperative learning where the students work in pair. As stated by Sukarno (2012), that Young learners learn through social context.

The strategy which was also frequently used is *Question and Answer*. The teacher applied this strategy after and during explaining the material. Sometimes, the teacher used this strategy in the middle of explaining the material to keep them on track (Khusna; 2020). Meanwhile, if applying in the end of the explanation, it is to check their understanding. The teacher usually called the name of the students one by one in the Zoom room and gave them a question. Then the students should answer the question. Moreover, to train their self-confidence, the teacher used to ask the students to raise their hands if they know the correct answer. This strategy aims to check how far their understanding during the explanation of the material. Therefore, this strategy can be called a formative assessment where it occurred in the teaching and learning process (Ridwan,

2017). Aside from its function as an assessment, it has many benefits to apply. The first is to make the students active during online learning. The second is to practice their speaking skill. The last is to motivate the students to be more focused on the material.

The most awaited activity by the students is Quiz. The teacher uses *Quizziz* application to make Quiz for the students. It is a platform that is suitable for young learners because it is easy to use. Before the lesson started, the teacher made some questions related to the material in *Quizziz* application. Then the teacher shared the link of the *Quizziz* to WhatsApp Group. All the students should open the link directly in Zoom room. The teacher then explained how to answer the Quiz using this platform. *Quizziz* provides music, score ranking, and Meme to make the students enjoy the Quiz. With this *Quizziz*, students also can compete with their classmates. Students also can get the result directly after answering the question. According to Ardiansyah & Muchyidin (2021) *Quizziz* is a game-based educational application that makes exercise interactive and fun. On his research, it revealed that all the students agreed that *Quizziz* is fun multiplying learning media in the English lecturing process.

Another strategy for synchronous learning on Zoom platform was *Sing and move*. It is a very common strategy used to teach English to young learners. Before the class, the teacher prepared a song related to the material. The song is played through the

screenshare feature on Zoom platform so that all the students can watch the video too. Firstly, the teacher will ask the students to watch and listen. Then the teacher will pronounce the lyrics slowly while showing the move. The students should follow what the teacher says and do. According to the teacher in her interview session that this strategy can help the students easily remember the song and its meaning. As it is stated before that an activity that involves physical movement can help the students to remember. Meanwhile, according to Dzanic (2016) in his research, songs can motivate young learners and have a positive influence on their vocabulary retention. Moreover, songs can create an enjoyable environment that makes young learners enthusiastic in learning. Speaking skills and listening skills are also acquired through songs. This strategy is very suitable to use in this pandemic condition where most students are bored joining online learning. They can learn and have fun at the same time.

In Asynchronous learning, the teacher used three strategies. They were *Role play*, *daily assessments*, and *Video Blogs (Vlog)*. *Role play* is the common strategy used by the teacher to practice the students' speaking skill and their confidence. This strategy commonly applied in the classroom with their friends. Because it occurred in online learning, the teacher asked the students to do it with their parents. Firstly, the teacher made a video containing a dialogue between parents and children then send it to the WhatsApp group. Next, the teacher asked the students to make a

dialogue with their parents as in the example below;

Parent: Dina, What is the color of your bag?(Pointing at the bag)

Dina : It is blue.

The focus of the dialogue was color. The students can change the word *Bag* with other items. Moreover, the teacher did not limit their creativity. The students surely can make the dialogue longer as long it still related to the material. The teacher gave one week to send the task before the next meeting coming. The video can be sent through WhatsApp Group. Based on previous study, Role play indeed can improve students' speaking skill and increase their confidence (Kurniawati, 2013). Besides that, having collaboration with parents also can strengthen their bonding (Đurišić & Bunijevac, 2017).

Daily test is the strategy used by the teacher to know the students' understanding of the material. Usually, it is given after the Zoom class ended. The teacher used *Forms* on *Microsoft 365* to make it easier for the students to do the test. The type of question was multiple choice and essay. The number of question is 5 to 10. The link of the task was shared to the WhatsApp Group. Even synchronous learning is flexible in time, but the teacher still gave a limitation. The students are given 24 hours to do the task so as not to get mixed up with other assignment. There are two types of assessments. They are summative and formative assessment. Based on Ridwan (2017), daily test is included formative assessment which is conducted

during the teaching and learning process. The teacher also gave feedback to the students from the result of the daily test in the next meeting.

The last strategy used by the teacher was Video Blog (*Vlog*). In this digital era, *Vlog* is hyphening around social media users. Many people share their daily activities or holiday moment through *Vlogging*. The teacher used this strategy to practice their speaking skill about certain materials like the things around the house. Firstly, the teacher gave a video as an example. Then the students are asked to mention at least three vocabularies that have been taught. The teacher made a simple video which suitable for first grade. The example of the video was below,

*Hello, my name is Rani.
Welcome to my bedroom.
This is my **pillow**, this is my
bolster and this is my
blanket. Thank You!.*

The students should also show the items which are being presented. Through making *Vlogs*, the students will always remember the vocabulary which has been taught because the students learn from *Realia*. Marzuki & Nurpahmi (2019) in their research stated that Video blogs (*Vlogs*) can improve students' speaking performance. In a previous study, the data showed that students were motivated and confident to speak English because they were given enough time to think about what they want to speak (Ersan et al., 2022).

All the strategies above have been considered well by the teacher. Aside to motivate the students, the teacher used those strategies to improve their English skills. It also has been adapted to the way Young learners learn a new language. Based on Imaniah & Nargis (2017) that Young learners learn their new language in some ways. First, teachers should use media or realia in presenting the activities or materials. Second, teachers should design the teaching strategy with a social context or cooperative class. Third, a teacher should use English in the classroom so that students can comprehend how the language is used. In this case, the teacher had already used a strategy to teach English to elementary students based on the unique characteristic of Young learners.

The challenge to teaching English in online learning

The teacher admitted that she faces challenges during online learning. It came not only from the teacher herself but also coming from the students and their parents. To make successful online learning, there should be cooperation among teachers, students, and parents (Đurišić & Bunijevac, 2017). The challenge which comes from the teacher was a lack of creativity. Sometimes, the teacher feels out of ideas to give different and interesting activities. As it is known that Young learners easily gets bored. A teacher should always update their teaching method to the need of the students nowadays. As mentioned by Manurung & Tadulako (2018) a teacher's creativity is crucial for effective

learning. Creative teachers can design fun teaching where a complex thing can be explained simply, and uninterested learners became interested in learning. (Manurung & Tadulako, 2018).

The challenge which came from the students was the connection to their internet. Many of them missed the teacher's explanation due to the internet error. This problem commonly occurred in online learning. Mahyoob (2020) in his study revealed 48% of university students in Saudi Arabia confront internet errors during online learning. Because of this error, the condition of online learning was not conducive. A previous study revealed that internet connection is the main problem in online learning (Khusna; 2020). It also wasted time so online learning takes longer than in a face-to-face classroom. To avoid the impact of the internet error, the teacher sent a video recording of Zoom during the teaching and learning process. So the students can learn through video recording at home.

The barrier coming from the parent was a lack of support and technology knowledge. The involvement of the parents was needed in teaching online for young learners. As mentioned by Jayanti & Indrakurniawan (2022) the parent has a role as a substitute for the teacher to monitor, facilitate and guide the students at home. In this case, some parents are not supportive because they do not have time to accompany their students during online learning. Consequently, their students did not pay attention to the teachers. Even

worse, they were absent during online classes. It was also the factor of the economy that made both parents work. In the end, their children missed their learning time. In addition, some parents lack technology knowledge. As stated before that a parent is a guide for the students in learning at home. Parents should know how to use technology to facilitate their children. In fact, many students did not collect their tasks because of it.

D. CONCLUSION

The success of teaching English to Young learners can be seen from their response to receiving the material. Teachers are expected to be able to make the students active, interested, and easy to understand the material even in a pandemic situation. Therefore, teachers should create a creative teaching strategy for their students. The teacher in this study had implemented several strategies which united the need and students' condition. The teachers provided strategies that not only can improve their English skills but also enjoyable learning with the help of reachable technology. It was proven by no significant barrier obstructs online learning. Moreover, the result of the daily test showed that most of the students understand the material. Furthermore, the teacher faced some challenges coming from herself, the students, and the parents. Nevertheless, some barriers can be overcome by the teacher.

This study is far from perfection. There is still deeper research that can be observed on the same topic. For further research, it is

recommended to observe the students' response to the teaching strategy implemented by the teacher. A quantitative study will be perfectly suitable to see the effectiveness of the teaching strategy.

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