

## PORTRAIT OF LEARNING ENGLISH AT MI DARRUN NAJJAH

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### ABSTRACT

The problem faced by English students when learning English at MI Darrun Najjah Prabumulih, Sumatra Selatan was how to make all students focus on the learning material and be active, considering that not all students can focus on what is conveyed and often there were students who also busy playing cellphones. To overcome this problem, the English teacher sometimes asked students some questions to regain their learning intention. The objective of this research were to find out the strategies in teaching listening to students of MI Darrun Najjah Prabumulih and the problems found by the English teacher in teaching listening as well as how they overcome the problems. The research was conducted by using descriptive qualitative research. This research was carried out at MI Darrun Najjah Prabumulih. The subject of this research was a English teacher. The research collected the data through interview guidance and used library research, which compiles extensive documentation on a single or a number of topics. Both original sources and secondary sources are used in this investigation. In conclusion, according to the context, conditions, and daily situation of the students. It is recommended that the result of the study needs to be integrated into the communication media which is appropriate to the needs of the students.

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### INTRODUCTION

In the learning process, the selection and use of appropriate approaches, methods, and techniques also require media to support the success of teaching and learning activities. As said by (Tafonao et al., 2020) media is part of the technological tools used in education that are created to make teachers and students more easily capture messages either given or received in teaching and learning activities. (Altman, 2012, p. 77) states that there are several benefits to using the media, as follows: (1) It increases the motivation of students in learning about their interest in the material being taught; (2) the material presented is more easily accepted and more clearly captured by the participants; (3) the process of teaching and learning activities does not seem monotonous and boring; (4)

students not only listen to lectures but can practice directly and participate in interacting in learning activities.

In this study, researchers took place at MI Darrun Najjah Prabumulih City. MI Darrun Najjah is a private elementary school under the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The learning system here applies semi-Islamic boarding school procedures where in addition to students getting general learning, students will also get learning about the Quran and its strengthening teaching subjects. In the process of language learning, there are three languages learned by Shiva, Indonesian, Arabic and English. Especially for English subjects, students start learning it from first grade to sixth grade, but the weight of English subjects only counts Local Content.

From the management and learning process, it is very natural that there is an obstacle to understanding the mastery of foreign languages in this school, the calculated subject hours are very lacking, the competence of learning development carried out by teachers is not effective because it is only limited to local content subjects, and the factor of many Islamic subjects and memorization of the Quran that must be followed by students makes the concentration of students divided. From this, it is based that there is a portrait of the ineffectiveness of the process of absorption and learning of English at MI Darrun Najjah.

The results of research relevant to the problems discussed were conducted by Juanda in 2010 conducting research entitled: "Learning Children Functional Literacy and Socio-Cultural Factors, a thesis submitted to meet as a requirement in obtaining a master degree. His research applies qualitative methods. This study groups several aspects, namely (1) cultural themes, (2) socio-cultural factors in functional literacy learning, and (3) factors that influence the teaching and learning process to run effectively.

Related to the grouping carried out, this study focuses more on eradicating illiteracy through learning. For this reason, research related to English learning with another focus needs to be done. This study aims to gain a deep and comprehensive understanding of: (1) how the English learning process, (2) approaches and methods of English language learning, (3) the role of teachers as sources and learning aids in English learning at MI Darrun Najjah Prabumulih City.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **The Role of English**

It cannot be denied that English is an international language of communication. English is used in official United Nations (UN) sessions. English is also used as the standard language for international aviation. Wherever we go in all parts of the world, we are faced with the use of English the first time we set foot at the airport of the country we are going to (Lertchalermtipakoon et al., 2021). This proves that English is very widely used. Therefore, learning and mastering English is a necessity, if we don't want to say it is a must. In Indonesia, learning

English is still something that is very difficult for most people and sometimes even scary for some circles.

Several years ago, before being introduced to elementary schools, English was taught starting at the junior high school level for three years and at the senior high school level for three years. Judging from the study time, six years is a long time to master a skill field. In fact, after studying for six years, most of us cannot converse in English, even in its simplest form. Countless even ended up not knowing the slightest bit of English (Agustin & Purwanto, 2022). In fact, (Purwanto, 2022) if you ask Indonesian children what their aspirations are, most of them want to be pilots, doctors, and so on. All of these professions require qualified English skills so that they can further develop themselves.

English is big business. Proficiency in English is important for one's competitiveness. With good English skills, good competitiveness, which is useful for our country too,". But that doesn't mean we have to forget Indonesian, which has become our national language. In this paper, we intend to invite all of you to think in a broad context, namely the context of education in Indonesia, not limited to in our country, the Republic of Indonesia, language education is an element of education as learning material, both in formal and non-formal educational institutions. Formally, (Purwanto, 2023), regarding the portrait of English language education in Indonesia, we don't only think about schools in urban areas. The focus is on the portrait of contemporary English education seen in the context of English language education in Indonesia.

Based on research conducted by the world's largest education institution, EF English First announced its first comprehensive report on the English proficiency index, or EF English Proficiency Index (EF EPI), in 44 countries. English proficiency in Indonesia is very low at 34th, while Malaysia is in 9th place. The EF EPI is the first index to compare adult English proficiency in various countries. This index uses unique test data (specific methodology) on more than two million people in 44 countries who used free online tests over a period of three years (2007-2009) (Argina et al., 2017)

As a first step regarding the current portrait of English education in Indonesia, from the point of view of educational equity, it cannot be ignored. Schools located in big cities, schools that have many luxurious facilities to support learning, or specially designed schools such as RSBI (Doringin et al., 2020). In general, it seems that there is a dividing line regarding the distribution of English education between the city and the suburbs, between most government schools and private schools (Hidayatullah, 2022). The students in the cities were far more fortunate than those in the suburbs. For example, students in cities can easily take English courses with either local teachers or native speakers, have easy access to study materials, and have various other English program conveniences. On the other hand, students in suburban areas often study in limited circumstances.

Based on the description above, the distribution of both facilities and infrastructure that functions as a support in the learning process also has a different impact; students who study English in urban areas have better English skills than suburban students. One answer is to be actively involved in speaking English. So it can be concluded that one of the keys to being able to master English well is to actively continue to use English or be actively involved in using English (the target language), as is done by most students in urban areas. The question is: what about students on the less fortunate margins?

We would like to think about those who are less fortunate in learning English, namely students who completely rely on pure English lessons from schools and their curriculum. This is where we will get an overview of English language education in Indonesia today. The first focus is on the curriculum that has been set in schools and whether it has been able to contribute to improving English language education or not. In general, the curriculum created by schools has not been able to enable students in Indonesia to actively speak English.

Furthermore, judging from the intensity of learning English in Indonesia, children currently have a lot of time to learn English (from kindergarten to PT). Logically and theoretically, the implications can easily be understood, if children have a lot of time to learn English, then they will quickly be able to speak English, especially since they learn English from an early age. Can this theory be applied in Indonesia? Apart from the school curriculum and methods for teaching, one can see a very crucial problem that is the main key to boosting English skills. (Mandasari & Oktaviani, 2018) states observing the position of English as a foreign language is the main reason why our children's abilities are low. In theory, we can understand that the perspective on English as a foreign language will certainly be different if you see English as a second language or L2 (second means of communication), (Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009), like in Malaysia and Singapore, where English is used in people's lives besides the main/official language.

In Indonesia, English is only learned at school and is not used in everyday life. That's why English in Indonesia is generally taught as a foreign language. The term 'foreign language' in the field of language teaching is different from 'second language'. (Kim & Bae, 2020) explains a foreign language is a language that is not used as a means of communication in certain countries where it is taught. Meanwhile, a second language is a language that is not the main language but is one of the languages used in general in a country. If we return to the understanding of language as a system of communication in speech and writing used by people of a particular country. So, the status of a language as a mother tongue, second language, or foreign language will also have an impact on the purpose of learning that language.

### **English as a Foreign Language**

English as a foreign language means that English is only used and has a position as a learning tool in an educational institution, both formal educational institutions and non-formal educational institutions, and is not used as a language in social life or in the interactions of everyday life, nor does it become a language on a national basis in a country (Harmer, 2007).

This shows that English is only studied in theory and knowledge. This is certainly contrary to the concept of learning a language: where learning a language means learning four language skills (Harmer, 2007): listening (listening), speaking (speaking), reading (reading), and writing (writing). In the learning process, which is positioned as a foreign language, each student must acquire an approach that emphasizes habituation and ability (speaking, reading, writing, and listening) to use the language they are studying.

(Richard & Renandya, 2022) state some of the characteristics of foreign language learning in schools are: 1. The goal of a foreign language learning method is practice, education, and culture. In foreign language learning, the practice of the language being learned is the most important thing that must be done by students. That is, the teacher not only provides knowledge about pronunciation, sentence structure, or order but also creates a language interaction, especially with the foreign language that has been obtained by the students. Students, this aims to get a mental boost as well as sharpen the development of knowledge. 2. The method used uses several principles:

1. Spoken language is the basic principle used by the teacher in the learning process.
2. Students are given an understanding of the material to be taught orally before reading or writing it down.
3. Prioritize active learning
4. Suppress practice by students

In communicating, knowledge of the linguistic order is really needed. The linguistic order helps students choose the form of speech and the meaning and function of the speech itself. That is, communication carried out by students is a process, and knowledge of the linguistic order alone is not enough (Astika, 2015).

The basic principle that is used as a principle of learning English, which is a foreign language, is the application of English itself, which is used in social contexts, meaning that language is used in interactions carried out in social life (Susanto & Latief, 2016). So, if language is a skill that must be used, then the use of English in real life is the key to success in mastering the language. For example, a student who has a large vocabulary may not be able to speak or understand English well, a student who memorizes all types of tenses or grammar may not be able to write English well, and a child who knows many English expressions may not necessarily use them properly.

### **Improving English Proficiency in Indonesia**

According to research, English proficiency has a close relationship with the progress of a country. The culture within a country can also change along with its openness to information, which is obtained by the initiative of its citizens to get credible news sources, the knowledge that knows no boundaries, and the tendency to share crucial topics. It doesn't stop there; this connection even influences economic conditions and the amount of income. According to World Bank data for 2017, per capita, net income has continuity with a country's English proficiency. The better the ability, the higher the income earned.

Per capita income in Indonesia is ranked very low, even though English proficiency is one level above it. Indonesia's high population figures also contribute to the overall average. GNI per capita and internet penetration in Indonesia are below the global average. This implies that Indonesia has great potential for improving the quality of English for its human resources. A massive approach and building awareness of the role of English as the most widely used foreign language in the world are what are needed in an effort to improve the quality of human resources in Indonesia (Nurgiyantoro, 2019; Purwanto et al., 2020).

Learning this language is no longer an obligation to get good grades at school, but also a defence against the increasingly challenging currents of globalization. English can open access to unlimited assets needed by people in Indonesia. Improving English skills can be done in various ways. Today, with the convenience of technology and increasing competition in the commercial education sector (Choi & Chung, 2021; Chapelle, 2003; Dede, 2008), the next generation of the nation should have many opportunities to improve the quality of each (Gilakjani et al., 2012).

In selecting educational sources or prospective teachers, it is important to pay attention to the most effective teaching methods for the self-development of students.

Teachers who teach must have the required competencies so that the knowledge conveyed can be well received. The method of teaching must also be adapted to the learning patterns of students in Indonesia. With good curriculum analysis and design, it is hoped that this will create a tendency for the nation's next generation to like English lessons.

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

In this research, the researcher using the qualitative method. Purpose of this qualitative research is to analyze the object in the natural condition, the object is analyzed without any manipulation. The condition and situation of students and English teachers in MI Darrun Najjah Prabumulih presented as they are. There had no change that is given by the researcher to the object. In addition, the qualitative research design is the logic that the data to be collected. The research

design in this study is conduct through descriptive qualitative research. Creswell (2014:171) stated that descriptive method is collecting the qualitative data, analyzing data, and writing result. Based on definition above, descriptive method is a method to collect and analyze data, and draw conclusion of analyze data. The techniques used to collect data in this study were (1) observation, (2) interviews, (3) review of documents and recordings. The data analysis procedure is carried out by means of (1) domain analysis, (2) taxonomic analysis, (3) component analysis, (4) cultural theme analysis. Checking the validity of data in research is carried out by means of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

### **Finding**

#### **a. Teacher Competence in Choosing Teaching Materials**

To find out how English subjects are implemented in MI Darrun Najjah, the following will be described the results of interviews and observations carried out in the stages of research conducted by researchers.

P = Researcher's Question, G = Teacher's Answer

Here are the result from the interview data:

P: What curriculum is applied at MI Darrun Najjah, ma'am?

G: for the curriculum applied we still use a mixture between KTSP and the 2013 Curriculum.

P: For English subjects, what classes get English Maple at this school, ma'am?

G: For MI Darrun Najjah English is given from grade IV to grade VI. one lesson hour for each week. 35 minutes.

From the interviews, it can be described that the curriculum used for the school is in accordance with the curriculum demands imposed by the government for the elementary curriculum. It's just that MI Darrun Najjah still carries out English learning starting from grade IV even though currently the government regulation does not explain in detail the status of English Subjects in the 2013 Curriculum in each school unit, especially at the elementary school level. More detailed information about this is obtained from the following interviews:

P: "The English subjects in this school belong to extracurricular or local content, mom?"

G: "For the English one, it goes into mulok"

Responding to the status of English subjects in MI Darrun Najjah, and associated with Permendikbud Number 67 of 2013 concerning the Basic Framework and Curriculum Structure of Ibtidaiyah Elementary Schools/Madrasahs, we can get a clear conclusion that indeed the position or status of English subjects in elementary schools has not been mentioned, as local

or extra-curricular content. Thus, it can be concluded that the position of English subjects is left absolutely to the conditions of each school. Permendikbud Number 67 of 2013 concerning the Basic Framework and Curriculum Structure of Elementary Schools / Madrasah Ibtidaiyah states that the subjects in the 2013 Curriculum consist of group A and group B where in the two groups, there is no writing about the existence of subjects that include Local Content. By not clearly mentioning what subjects are included in Mulok, it can be described that each elementary school (SD) has the flexibility to determine the position of what subjects can be included in Mulok. On this basis, then some elementary schools still include English as part of mulok, including MI Darrun Najjah. And because schools have the ability to determine their own teaching patterns in schools, the next interview questions are related to the learning strategies used.

#### **b. Teacher Competence in Planning / Designing Teaching**

Data on teacher competence in planning / designing teaching found that the ability to design learning is still very lacking, because when observations are made no teacher can show lesson plan documents in the form of lesson plans that they make as a guide to carry out the teaching and learning process. In carrying out the teaching and learning process, teachers use what is from the textbooks used so that the ability to formulate learning objectives, organize teaching materials, select and determine time allocation, determine media and learning resources and determine forms, procedures and evaluation tools is also not visible.

#### **c. Teacher Competence in Carrying Out Teaching and Curriculum Suitability**

Furthermore, regarding the technical implementation of the curriculum in schools, researchers tried to ask teachers about RPP and the implementation of English mulok in schools. The following is a fragment of an interview with the teacher about the technical implementation of learning.

P: "Fulfilling the curriculum applied about Mulok Bahas English, ma'am, how do schools overcome as well as practice their implementation at MI Darrun Najjah?"

G: "Yes, because of the situation we still use RPP according to KTSP but for the learning process in class as much as possible we adjust to the latest applicable curriculum. Because frankly to fully implement the 2013 curriculum we have not been able to. There is still a lot to prepare."

P: "What obstacles do you face in implementing English in school today?"

G: "Actually, it's more towards supporting materials. This means that with the removal of English from the 2013 curriculum, teaching manuals and student training books are very rarely found. Even if there is, the quality is not good. So as teachers we find it a bit difficult to be able to find good English manuals and teaching methods for children."



From the interview above, it can be described that the position of English for the latest curriculum has received less attention from the government. The abolition of English as mulok subjects has an impact on the absence of teacher manuals and student exercise books that have good quality. This is certainly ironic, that in an era that is all advanced and English has become an inseparable part of modern people's lives today, the world of Indonesian education actually does not seem to pay much attention to English language education at the elementary level.

### **Discussion**

A method used in learning a foreign language is closely related to knowledge about pedagogy, psychology, and linguistics. Pedagogic knowledge emphasizes the formation and development of students' habits and abilities. Meanwhile, when viewed from a psychological level, an interest in learning a foreign language is needed. Teachers must know if children do not speak English in their environment and if they learn English not only as a compulsory subject but as a necessity to be used in society and everyday life. In essence, creating awareness in students to love English will be the main key to growing interest in learning English. So, the problems that are very often encountered are feelings of anxiety, nervousness, and fear of being wrong (Haladyna & Downing, 1989). Foreign language learning is achieved not only by developing theory but also by applying the theory that has been obtained by students in the language learning process (Geursen et al., 2010).

As an educator, knowing the purpose of language learning is highly emphasized. As we all know, the main goal of language learning is to prepare students to communicate and use the language they have learned. Every meeting that is carried out with the learning process involves the acquisition of sentences that have been carried out by students. However, practicing the language they have acquired is sometimes limited to acquisition in linguistic form without the practice of communicating itself after leaving the classroom (Robertson, 2011; Fadlia et al., 2022).

As long as English is considered a foreign language, our children's abilities will not experience much change, so discourse is needed to change the position of English in Indonesia. Teachers should use English teaching techniques that are in accordance with the position of English in Indonesia. From some of the descriptions, there are three points that need to be considered as a first step in reviving English language education itself. The first is no matter how great a method is, if it doesn't match the environmental conditions (context), then it won't give many results. The second is, as long as the learning problems that plague students are not solved, the hope of achieving quality learning outcomes in accordance with what is contained or expected in the curriculum will be difficult to realize. The third is, it is necessary to apply the use of English in a

real context in Indonesian society so that English is no longer just a foreign language that is learned in theory but becomes part of everyday communication tools.

The Communicative Language Teaching Model method is good for teaching at school. Repetition of English vocabulary every day starts to make children able to understand the meaning of the vocabulary. The teachers also do not hesitate to justify the pronunciation of the wrong word when students mispronounce the English vocabulary that is being taught, although there is still a lack of approach for students who really do not understand the meaning of English vocabulary (Bambang Purwanto & Hidayad, 2022). Opportunities from the Communicative Language Teaching method students have There is a lot of English vocabulary with this method, but children from backgrounds using Indonesian or even their mother tongue will do better when the teacher approaches the child more so that the child not only understands but also understands the meaning of English (Pan & Xu, 2011; McCarten, 2007).

The threat from the Communicative Language Teaching method is when children are able to master English at school, but when they are at home and communicate with their parents, the parents do not understand what the child is communicating. Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that a more effective learning method for learning English for young children is the communicative language teaching method. This method is considered more meaningful than the grammar-translation method. This method is less contextual when it comes to the characteristics of early childhood learning. This is the same as what was said by (Hashim et al., 2018) that the communicative language teaching method has fairly high effectiveness in improving students' English communication skills. (An et al., 2020) also said that English language activity can be increased by the communicative language teaching method. The same thing was also said by (Nur Wulandari, 2016) that the use of the communicative language teaching method can provide more meaningful English learning for students.

In accordance with the purpose of this method, which is for students to acquire the ability to communicate. Communication is an action taken by students in interaction. Preparing students to carry out meaningful interactions with natural language is the main goal of language learning (McMahon & McMahon, 2009, p. 125).

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

English as a foreign language in Indonesia needs to be improved, especially for students who are still in primary and secondary education. The elimination of English lessons at the basic education level is not appropriate because in this increasingly globalized world, mastery of English is very important to be able to compete with the world community. Therefore, learning

English as early as possible is important to equip elementary level students to have a basic English language to study at a higher level of education. Based on observations that occur in the field, there is still much to be improved in the development of the 2013 curriculum, especially about the elimination of English subjects as local content. This deletion resulted in unclear English positions for the elementary level so that there were differences in the content of lessons between one school and another. A problem that also arises from this elimination is the loss of good learning facility support for good subjects. Teachers do not have good quality manuals, resulting in a lack of good lesson input for students. The development of the 2013 curriculum that pays attention to the conditions of students and teachers and is in accordance with the needs of today's progress is very important so that the education curriculum becomes truly effective and has a positive impact, especially for students and a better world of education.

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