

IMPROVING CHILDREN'S ENGLISH SKILLS BY USING LINGOKIDS APP

Oleh:

Tjut Dwi Anggraini Damcha¹⁾, Erna Budiarti²⁾

^{1,2}Panca Sakti University, Bekasi, Indonesia

¹tjutdwi.anggrainidamcha@gmail.com

²bbbudiarti@gmail.com

Abstract.

The rapid development of technology and industry had influenced the learning capacity of childhood education. The childhood education is also adjusting to the revolution. Thus, a lot of learning media are created to meet the needs of learning process. The use of mother language in daily life alongside the foreign languages especially English language. One of childhood's characteristic is they can easily absorb the sounds of foreign language they heard and see around them. Unfortunately, it's often occurred that their ability wasn't supported with the right guidance by their surroundings, so they can't interpret the sounds they heard, but only repeated the sounds. They needed a suitable learning media and method to stimulate their language ability. One of digital learning media based of an app is called LingoKids app. LingoKids app is a playlearning™ app for children between the ages of 2 to 8 years old. LingoKids app is a learning media that researcher used in this research to optimizing English language ability in childhood education. The result showed that LingoKids can help improve early childhood English skills and is suitable for application with a variety of learning media.

Keywords: English skills, LingoKids, early childhood

1. INTRODUCTION

Currently, the use of English language has coexisted with Bahasa Indonesia in daily life use. From the technology usage, social media, to the murals and scribbles on the streets is using English. English speaking ability become an important aspect for job recruitments or supporting the social status of a person in society. English which has become an international language is introduced from early childhood. A lot of schools using bilingual mode, or using two or more languages in the learning process. Quoted from the official website of English language institute EF (English First), Indonesia is in 80th position from 112 on EPF (English Proficiency Index) in 2021[1]. That fact makes Indonesia in a low position in English language skill among other countries.

This is a concern for educators, making many educational institutions trying to develop an effective learning media for introducing English to children. Not only that, social media and video-sharing sites such as YouTube also provide a lot of English-language content that is easily accessible by early childhood. Parents also do not hesitate to send their children to English language courses so that their children are accustomed to speaking English in everyday life from an early age. Early childhood has a characteristic that is easy to absorb as much information as possible from their surrounding environment during the golden age (0 to 8 years). However, if learning is not accompanied by appropriate and directed guidance, of course, language development stimulus activities in early childhood cannot occur optimally. The potential that

children have from birth will develop when raised in a supportive environment[6]. On the other hand, no matter how big a person's potential is, it will mean nothing if it is not developed in a supportive environment and an effective learning media.

Learning English in early childhood needs to pay attention to the characteristics of early childhood itself. Early childhood has unique characteristics, such as having a high sense of knowledge, likes to identify, can absorb information around them easily, and likes to play and imitate[10]. In addition, the learning tools for early childhood must be interesting for them. In choosing learning media for early childhood, there are many learning media based on early childhood characteristics. Educators must be careful in choosing the right learning media for early childhood, according to the needs of the child himself.

Introduce English to early childhood through learning media shows its significant role[4], for example, learning media that contains visual, audio and visual-audio media. An effective learning media should help teachers in teaching and transferring the information to children. Learning media can also help teachers to share the real experiences to children. By using various learning media, children can be motivated to learn English.

In this study, we will discuss the way to improve English skills for early childhood by using digital media such as YouTube videos and of course, the Playlearning™ app called LingoKids. LingoKids is a playlearning™ app in English for children between the ages of 2 to 8 years old. This app includes more than 600 learning games, activities, and songs for

children to learn colors, numbers, animals, and everyday language in English. The LingoKids app incorporated a method it refers to as playlearning™, “a methodology based on play and interaction that manages to capture and retain the attention of the youngest children, motivating them in their advancement towards the knowledge of the new language and achieving excellent learning results.”[11].

LingoKids is a play-through-learning app that helping children to develop skills like creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, and communication[3]. Including more than 750 learning activities (games, songs, & videos), 3.000 essential vocabulary words, and 60 foundational topics to reinforce in-school learning and introduce 21st-century skills. LingoKids developed using content from Oxford University Press, the world largest academic publisher with a global presence.

In early childhood education, language is an important developmental aspect. The aspect that children learn since they are born after physical-motor is language. Knowledge of language development in early childhood is very helpful in achieving good learning of basic language skills[2]. Once the child is steady with his mother tongue or native language, it will be easier to impart knowledge about the second language. It is important for parents and educators to stimulate the child's mother tongue first until it is optimal, then provide a second language stimulus to the child.

It can be understood that to stimulate language skills for children, a method that is in accordance with the characteristics of early childhood is needed, especially to teach English as an international language which will greatly help children in the future. It is hoped that LingoKidsPlaylearning™ app as a learning media can help children develop English language skills with the right and appropriate approach for early childhood.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this research is qualitative method with descriptive approach. Qualitative research method according to Suparlan[7] often also referred to as the humanistic approach, because in this approach the perspective, way of life, tastes or emotional expressions of the citizens being studied are in accordance with the problem being studied, also includes data that needs to be concluded. The researcher narrowed the selection of informants using a purpose sampling technique, namely by selecting people who were considered and believed to know the problems being studied. Informants were selected from: 1) children who study English as a second language, hereinafter referred to as “Ananda”; 2) parents in the family who provide encouragement and imitation of their children; 3) other family members in the research location. Data collection was obtained through observation,

interviews and documentation. The data analysis technique used in this study used a pre-cycle, cycle I and cycle II flow. The pre-cycle occurs in the third month of January 2022 (January 17th – 21st 2022), the first cycle occurs in the fourth week of January 2022 (January 24th – 28th 2022) and the second cycle occurs in the first week of February 2022 until the second week of February 2022 (February 2nd – 11th 2022). Each cycle consists of 2 meetings in pre-cycle and cycle I, then 3 meetings in cycle II.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Pre-cycle

The use of language in early childhood cannot be separated from the habit of using the children's everyday language at home and the environmental conditions in which the family lives. Ananda lives in a housing complex in the Jatibening area, Bekasi, which is a fairly dense suburban area. Ananda's parents have Javanese and Balinese blood, but in everyday life Ananda uses Indonesian when communicating with his parents and other family members. Ananda has no accent or dialect when speaking.

Researcher have observed the development of Ananda language starting from Ananda aged 4 years 5 months in 2020 until he was 5 years 10 months in February 2022. However, data collection in the pre-cycle was taken from January 17th to 21st, 2022. Ananda's mother tongue ability has developed rapidly very well, Ananda was able to compose sentences from four-word chunks and write with his own spelling. Ananda's English skills are at an early or beginner stage. Ananda already knew some simple vocabulary about colors, fruits, animals and toys in English. However, Ananda's vocabulary is still under 200 words. Usually, Ananda learns and imitates English vocabulary on bilingual television shows and video games. Ananda's initial English proficiency is illustrated in the table below.

TABLE II
PRE-CYCLE ASSESSMENT RESULTS

No	Assessment Aspects	Indicators	Achievement Results
1.	Listening	1.1 Listen to the nursery rhyme “Five Little Fruits”.	MB
		1.2 Sing along to the nursery rhyme “Five Little Fruits”.	
		1.3 Recite the vocabularies found in the nursery rhyme “Five Little Fruits”.	MB
2.	Reading	2.1 Read the vocabularies about fruits such as “apple”, “banana”, “watermelon”, etc. with correct spelling and sounds.	MB
		2.2 Rewrite the vocabulary that is read and heard.	2.5 2.6 2.7 2.8 2.9 2.10
		2.3 Spells the vocabulary that is read and heard correctly.	BB
		2.4	BB

2.11 peaking	S	2.12 vocabulary of fruits using the help of picture media.	Mention the 2.13 2.14 B	M
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Based on the table above, the researcher uses a Likert scale as a benchmark for assessment with the following information:

- BB = Belum Berkembang (undeveloped yet)
- MB = Mulai Berkembang (started to develop)
- BSH = Berkembang Sesuai Harapan (developed as expected)
- BSB = Berkembang Sangat Baik (very well developed)

There are 4 aspects of assessment in English learning that are used to measure Ananda's English skills; listening skills, reading skills, writing skills, and speaking skills. The results of pre-cycle observations showed that Ananda still had difficulty spelling and rewriting vocabulary with the correct spelling. But Ananda began to be able to recall the vocabulary he knew.

B. 1st Cycle

Learning in cycle I lasted for 2 meetings and was carried out by home visit or home visits, taking into account the applicable health protocols. In the first cycle, the activities began with greetings, greetings and praying together. The researcher invited Ananda to mentioned the fruits that Ananda liked, mentioning the shapes, characteristics and colors of objects. The conversation was conducted using English by the researcher, but Ananda was allowed to answer and express his opinion in Indonesian if there was a vocabulary that he did not understand. The researcher used English which was then translated into Indonesian, but some of the questions understood by Ananda were no longer interpreted by the researcher.

Then the researcher directed Ananda to listen to an educational video about fruits vocabulary. The educational video was obtained from the "English SingSing" YouTube channel entitled "Kids Vocabulary – Fruits & Vegetables". In the video, Ananda is directed to listen to the pictures of the fruit, the written form and the sound of the word first. Then in the "Review" section, Ananda is invited to repeat the words mentioned in the video (after 2 seconds delay).



Fig 2 English educational video – kids vocabulary



Fig 3 English educational video – kids vocabulary

At the end of the learning activity, the researcher gave reinforcement again by inviting Ananda to mention the names of the fruits that had been studied. As a result, from the 10 fruit names learned, 7 fruit names could be repeated well by Ananda, while 3 fruit names still needed scaffolding in the form of citing examples by the researcher. Researchers also do reflection after the learning activities are completed. The results of Ananda's achievements in the first cycle are shown in table 2.

TABLE III
1ST CYCLE ASSESSMENT RESULTS

No.	Assessment Aspects	Indicators	Achievement Results
1.	Listening	1.1 Listen and watch the educational video "Kids Vocabulary – Fruits & Vegetables".	BSH
		1.2 Recite the vocabularies found in the educational video "Kids Vocabulary – Fruits & Vegetables".	BSH
2.	Reading	2.1 Reading vocabularies about fruits such as "apple", "banana", "watermelon", etc. with correct spelling and sounds.	BSH
3.	Writing	3.1 Rewrite the vocabulary that is read and heard.	MB
		3.2 Spelling the vocabulary that is read and heard correctly.	MB
4.	Speaking	4.1 Mention the vocabulary of fruits through fruits drawing activity.	BSH

In cycle I data, the results of observations by researchers are as follows:

- 1) Researchers did not provide activities that involve Ananda's gross motor skills, so that during learning activities Ananda looked less focused because of excess energy that had not been channeled.
- 2) At the second meeting of the first cycle, the researcher still used the help of educational videos as learning media so that Ananda considered monotonous.
- 3) The researcher gave Ananda an opportunity to express his opinion during learning activities using English and provided assistance when Ananda had difficulty finding the right vocabulary.

4) The researcher involved Ananda in the activity of drawing the final conclusion in the learning process.

C. 2nd Cycle

In 2nd cycle, the researcher implemented the learning model and media according to the lesson plan that had been prepared. The learning in cycle II lasted for 3 meetings and was carried out by home visit, taking into account the applicable health protocols. In addition to using educational videos, researchers also use English educational applications "Lingokids". Lingokids is a playlearning™ app in English for children between the ages of 2 to 8 years old. The app includes more than 600 learning games, activities, and songs for children to learn numbers, colors, animals, and everyday language in English. The Lingokids app incorporated a method it refers to as playlearning™, "a methodology based on play and interaction that manages to capture and retain the attention of the youngest children, motivating them in their advancement towards the knowledge of the new language and achieving excellent learning results."

After greeting and praying with Ananda, Ananda directed to carry out active movement activities following the song. The researcher gave Ananda the opportunity to choose the song that would be used to accompany the active movement activities. Ananda chose the song "Banana ChaCha", then an active movement activity began which was attended by Ananda and researchers. Ananda moves to follow the movements demonstrated through the video while singing the accompaniment song.

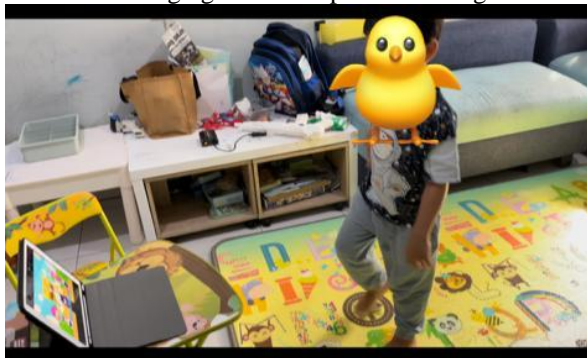


Fig 4 active movement activity

After the active movement activity, researcher began the main learning activity. It was started with learning through education video from English SingSing, in the 2nd cycle researcher increased the difficulties from a basic vocabulary video to a simple story speaking video. The video titled "Snow White – Do You Want Some More?" and contained three parts of speaking; listen, speak aloud, and your turn. At first, Ananda watched the simple story with a subtitle, then in the second part, Ananda watched the simple story but with no audio, but subtitles so he would read aloud the subtitles. Lastly, the video part of 'your turn' only contained the video with no subtitles. Ananda had to dubbed the video with his own voice and the story he had learned in first and second part. At the 1st and 2nd encounter

of 2nd cycle, Ananda still needed help from researcher to remember some parts of story but at 3rd encounter, Ananda did remember the whole story by his own.



Fig 5 simple story speaking video

Next activities were runner game and boat navigation game from Lingokids app. The runner game: fruits is a game where the child will help Cowy (one of Lingokids characters) collect the fruits she needs by using their fingers to tap the screen as Cowy running through the track. But they must be careful of some spectacles. As they collecting the fruits, a letter will appear one by one until it becomes a word of a fruit. For example, when they collecting "Strawberry" when they collected first strawberry, the first letter S will appear, and so on. This is an exciting and fun game, also children will repeat the name of fruit that appeared in the screen as Cowy collecting and shouting the name of fruit when she had collected one. As for boat navigation game, a boat boarded by Lisa (also one of Lingokids character, a friend of Cowy) must collect all of 8 fruits in the pond. But they have to be careful and fast because the fruit can be taken by another character. Ananda had to navigated the boat with a steering wheel, a forward and backwards button. They have to focus and careful not to miss a fruit in the pond.

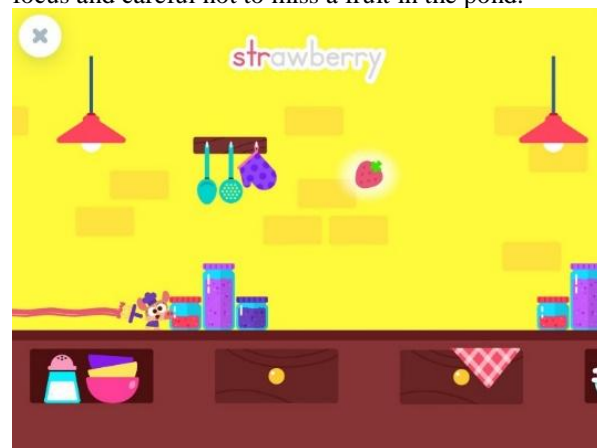


Fig 6 runner game: fruits



Fig 7 boat navigation game: fruits



Fig 8 boat navigation game: fruits

As predicted, this app was a total fun to Ananda. He really likes to play the games, especially the runner game. Some children liked a fast-paced game, but it will be tiresome if they throwing tantrums when they got lose. Ananda did good at repeating the vocabulary of fruits when he played. After the learning sessions ended, researcher and Ananda draws a conclusion together and reflected. Ananda's learning achievement in 2nd cycle are written in table 3.

TABLE IV
2ND CYCLE ASSESSMENT RESULTS

No.	Assessment Aspects	Indicators	Achievement Results
1.	Listening	1.1 Listen and watch the educational video "Snow White – Do You Want Some More?"	BSB
		1.2 Recite the simple story from video "Snow White – Do You Want Some More".	
2.	Reading	2.1 Read the subtitles from simple story speaking video "Snow White – Do You Want Some More" with correct spelling and grammar.	BSH
3.	Writing	3.1 Rewrite the vocabulary that is read and heard with correct spelling and grammar.	BSH
4.	Speaking	4.2 Mention	

the vocabulary of fruits through fruits drawing activity. BSB

From the observation data in 2nd cycle, researcher did some reflections;

- 1) Researcher did active moving activity before main learning activity to helps Ananda focused and regulated his excess energy.
- 2) Researcher have used variative education toys tools (educational videos and games).
- 3) Researcher provided for Ananda to expressed their opinions during the learning process.
- 4) Researcher involved Ananda in drawing final conclusions from learning activities.

After 2nd cycle, researcher compared the outputs from pre-cycle, 1st cycle and 2nd cycle. The comparative results can be seen from the following table.

TABLE V
COMPARATIVE RESULTS
PRE-CYCLE, 1ST CYCLE, AND 2ND CYCLE

No.	Assessment Aspects	Learning Achievement Results		
		Pre-cycle	1 st cycle	2 nd cycle
1.	Listening	MB	BSH	BSB
2.	Reading	MB	BSH	BSH
3.	Writing	BB	MB	BSH
4.	Speaking	MB	BSH	BSB

Based on table 4, it can be concluded that there is an improving in Ananda's learning achievement result from pre-cycle, 1st cycle and 2nd cycle. The results of this research proved that LingoKids App's contents can improving a child's English language skills.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the result of improving children's English skills by using LingoKids App as a learning media can improved a child's English learning skills, through educational videos and games that attracted the interest of children. LingoKids App can helps to improve childhood language skills, especially English including listening skill, reading skill, writing skill and speaking skill. LingoKids App covers all of early childhood education learning aspects; learning through play, learning by doing, and fun learning.

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