

**Teacher Professional Development Program in Indonesian Public Elementary Schools:  
Developing a Mini Course in Basic EYL (English for Young Learner) Teaching Skill**

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**Abstract**

The teaching of English in Elementary Schools in Indonesia have been conducted for decades, but based on literature review and preliminary study, most of the teachers teaching English in Public Elementary Schools, both in the regular local content subject or English extracurricular activities have inadequate English and English teaching skills. In-service training was proposed due to the teachers' time availability. The training activities will be conducted after school hours and taken place in their schools. The development of the training employs a research and development research method comprising the preliminary study, class observations, interview, the development of materials, instructional media and evaluation that will be validated by the experts. After the expert validation stage, the products which have been revised based on the experts' suggestions are then applied in the field validation. The last stage is the revision of the products based on field validation. This product is projected to be an example of a teacher professional development program for teachers teaching English in Elementary School.

**Keywords:** *English for young learner, teacher professional development*

**Abstrak**

Pengajaran bahasa Inggris di Sekolah Dasar (SD) di Indonesia telah berjalan selama puluhan tahun namun berdasar hasil studi pustaka maupun penelitian pendahuluan menunjukkan bahwa pengajar bahasa Inggris di SD di Indonesia baik pengajar kelas maupun kelas ekstrakurikuler, semua memiliki kemampuan bahasa Inggris dan kemampuan mengajar yang masih kurang. Pelatihan dalam jabatan merupakan salah satu alternatif kegiatan yang diusulkan pada penelitian ini yang akan dilaksanakan diluar jam mengajar dan diselenggarakan di sekolah. Pengembangan program pelatihan ini menggunakan metode penelitian Penelitian dan Pengembangan yang meliputi penelitian pendahuluan, wawancara, observasi kelas, pengembangan materi, media pembelajaran dan validasi dari ahli. Berdasarkan validasi ahli maka akan dilakukan uji coba lapangan dan revisi. Produk akhir pada penelitian ini yaitu program pelatihan sebagai bentuk program pengembangan profesionalitas guru yang diharapkan bisa menjadi program percontohan untuk pengembangan kemampuan bahasa Inggris dan kemampuan mengajar bahasa Inggris bagi guru SD

**Kata Kunci:** *Pengajaran bahasa Inggris pada anak-anak, program pengembangan profesionalitas guru*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The teaching of English as a foreign language in Elementary School (ES), officially, has been conducted for decades, starting in 1993 by the issue of Indonesian Ministry of National Education (MoNE) decree number 0060/U/1993 on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1993 stated that English is included as a local content subject in ES in Indonesia. To be exact, MoNE's 1993 decree gave opportunities to schools to include English as the local content subject which responded positively nationally especially by some Provinces such East Java, West Java, Central Java and DI Yogyakarta (Suyanto, 2004). Furthermore, East Java Province issued a provincial decree No. 1702/105/1994, 30 March 1994, which states that English becomes a compulsory local content subject.

Focusing on the classroom teaching-learning of English, especially in public schools, several studies stated that the challenges faced by teachers to perform quality English for young learner teaching (EYL) were much bigger compared to the benefits (Cahyati and Madya, 2019; Rohkim, 2013; Husein, 2015).

In 2013, the most current curriculum (Kurtilas) was introduced which officially changed the landscape of the teaching of English in Elementary school in general especially in public schools. Especially after the issue of the Ministry of Education and Culture decree No 62/ 2014 about extracurricular activities in a primary and secondary school which was responded by schools by dropping English as a local content subject into an extracurricular activity, for example, English club.

Responding the change in the official setting of teaching, from regular classroom subject into more like club activities, several studies showed that the English

Club or extracurricular activities gained more positive responses and result on lesson planning and teaching material in particular (Wijaya, 2015; Solekhah, 2015). Some pertinent challenges were reported by some recent studies albeit the positive gain aforementioned. (Kuwat and Ghazali, 2018) informed that there were three most challenging aspect faced by EYL teachers: vocabulary mastery, classroom management (especially big class), and pronunciation accuracy. Furthermore, inadequate teachers' capacity (especially to create fun activities), insufficient school facility, the absence of a curriculum, lack of learning recourse were also a few aspects listed as the drawbacks of EYL teaching in Indonesian ES (Sulistiyo, et al., 2019; Sudrajat, 2015; Yulia & Widyarini, 2018; Harmanto, 2016). In other words, despite the change in regulation, the teaching model from the regular classroom to less formal extracurricular, the challenges remained the same. The EYL teaching in Indonesia has been having problem to tackle the core problem which is dealing with EYL teacher competency and teaching skill.

On the other hand, based on the preliminary study on surveying several ES teachers showed particularly positive feedback. Assuming that English is not listed as a local content subject which exempts the class teacher to teach English in the class, the surveyed teachers were eager to improve their English skill especially to improve their vocabulary and pronunciation. This was supported by Husein's (2018) study which showed that the willingness to self-study for his/her teacher's professional development is one of the indicators of an ideal EYL teacher.

Theoretically, EYL teachers have to fulfil several competencies and indicators to qualify the position. Husen (2018) revealed

several indicators of exemplary EYL teacher profile in his studies and one of them was a high degree of English exposure they gave to the students in the form of Teacher Talk in English. Inline with that, (Halliwell, 2020) emphasized on the use of speaking activities and oral practice as the core activity in EYL teaching and learning. In this case, the teachers' speaking skills (vocabulary items and pronunciation) were the most crucial aspects to address.

It is seen that above mentioned obstacles faced by EYL teachers would not directly be solved by changing the status of English teaching. Specific measures to tackle the core problem which is the teacher inadequate English and teaching skills are needed. Restated Sulistyono's (2019) study reports that the learning sources was one highly in need. Moreover, considering the ideal condition of EYL teaching required, it was the teachers who needed changes. Considering the exemplary profile of EYL teachers, it is the teachers' speaking skill that has to be improved.

So, a training program for teachers and in-service training as a teacher professional development program in speaking might be an alternative solution. Moreover, Yulia & Widayarni (2018) conducted a community service program, assisting EYL teachers in doing their English extracurricular activities which got positive responses from the class teachers. With this in mind, this present study objective is to develop a minicourse in basic English and teaching skills.

An in-service training program is proposed to be one of the most effective solutions due to some conditions. Based on the preliminary study and some review on related studies, the researcher can see the positive feedback and effects on KKG (Elementary School teachers working group). It means that the teachers are familiar with this program and have seen

the beneficial results from the program. The fact that English is not included as a subject to be discussed in KKG is the second reason to take. The proposed in-service training is projected to be one of the KKG programs. It is in line with what is suggested that KKG can actively conduct any training for their teachers independently in response to any needs or problems they have in teaching (Stevenson et al., 2009). Besides that, regarding that most of the teachers teaching English in Elementary schools are class teachers so the training participants are taken from this group of teachers. This decision is supported by the research done in Jakarta that in-service training given to the class teachers will be more beneficial than the in-service training given to subject teachers. The trained class teachers are more successful and liked by the students compared to the part-time subject teacher (Chodijah, 2007).

More specifically, the materials are given, the length of the training and the training procedures are described in chapter two along with the methodological aspects of the research. Avoiding the problems the teachers might have in managing their time, the training will be done after the teaching hours so it will not disturb the teaching activities. It is also planned to be given to only twelve teachers taken randomly from ten schools in Kecamatan Donomulyo as the subject of the research. It is expected that in-service training will help the teachers improve their General English and practical teaching skills. The improvement they will have is one of the efforts to reach the ideal condition and to reduce the problems resulting from the unqualified teachers teaching English in Elementary Schools. This solution is taken to break the cycle of poor teaching results and low

student interest due to insufficient skill the teachers have.

The expected product of this study is a mini course for teachers teaching English in Elementary Schools. The basic English skill course is intended to improve the teachers' General English and practical teaching skill. The product is presented in the form of the training program which consists of training materials, training procedures, and assessment. The objectives, topics, and the details time table are described in the training outline. The training materials are presented in two forms: a handbook or training manual for the trainers with some notes for procedures and additional information and worksheets for trainees. The objective for each topic and meeting is written in the training outline. The topics for general English are derived from Elementary Schools' basic competencies and indicators for English subjects (MoNE/22, 2006). While the practical teaching skills are in form of classroom language lists which are adapted from British Council Classroom Language training (British Council, 2010) and Jane Willis' (2006) proposed Activity-based Language Learning at Primary Level.

## **2. METHOD**

Research and Development design (R&D) is considered as the most suitable design for this study for it engages two main aspects: research and development. More specifically, Borg and Gall's (1983:772) educational R&D is taken for its point of view for this research design is a process used to develop and validate educational products. The process used is referred to the R&D cycle which consists of four main steps: studying research findings, developing products, field testing, and

revising. Here we can conclude that Borg and Gall's R&D design cycle validates the educational products they have developed by doing field testing. In line with that point of view, Yalden's (1985) procedure of developing language programs also employs the term evaluation which is trying out the products that have been developed and considering the learners' performance to revise the products. Both Borg and Gall's and Yalden's 'R&D cycles' are employing field testing or trying out to validate the products.

Another point of view related to the R&D cycle which is equally important proposed by Latief (2008:2-3) about the coverage of the 'term' research in Research and Development Design. He argues that in R&D, the 'research' term doesn't only refer to the need assessment before developing the products. This 'research' is also needed in the data collection and data analysis for interpreting the feedback given by the expert in expert validation step and feedback obtained from the tryout. Besides, Latief (2008) mentions one more steps in the R&D cycle which is expert validation.

As mentioned before that this study is employing R&D design therefore clear R&D cycles are needed in the research procedure. Before going more specific into the cycles, in summary, this study is using R&D research design with the point of view that it is a research design consisting of two main aspects: research and design. The 'research' covers the need assessment, the data collection and data analysis in expert validation and tryout. Besides that, the validating step includes expert validation not only by trying out the product. In other words, the research design used for this study is adapting Borg and Gall's (1983) R&D cycles and Yalden's (1985) procedures. The decisions to adapt those

two R&D procedures are due to the similarity of the products developed. In Borg and Gall's R&D cycles, the product developed was a mini-course and Yalden developed a Language Programs which are closely similar to the in-service training that is going to be developed in this study.

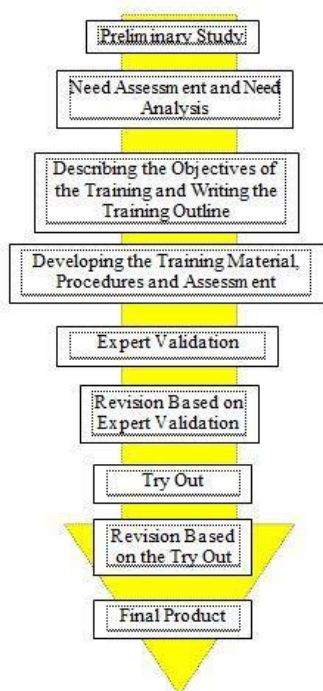


Figure 1. The Adapted Version of R&D Cycles for Developing In-service Training for Teachers Teaching English in Elementary Schools

### Product development

#### Training objectives and training outline development

The objectives of the training are derived from the result of the need assessment and need analysis that are improving the teachers' general English and teaching skill. By the end of the training, the teachers (trainees) can show some improvement in their general English skill and their practical teaching skill. More

specific objectives are listed in each meeting in the course outline. The training outline consists of the training identity, the training schedule, the training topics and sub-topics, and the training matrix. The training outline form was adapted from ICELT (In-service Certificate in Language Teaching) of Cambridge University.

#### Training material, procedures, and assessment development

In this stage, all of the materials, procedures and assessment used in the training are developed. For each meeting and topic, the materials are arranged accompanied by the procedures of training or the activities and assessment going to do in the training session. The materials are given to the trainees as worksheets. The trainer's training manual is completed by the instructions for each meeting of the training. The training procedures are written specifically in each meeting' training plan. Kinds of assessment are provided in each section of the meeting and the topic. All of the materials, procedures and assessment which have been developed then sent to the expert to be validated.

Considering the data collected in the need assessment, in brief, it is seen that the teachers need both general English skills and teaching skill. This very broad area of training needs to break down to get more specific materials. First, a review of the related study about in-service training for Elementary School teachers in Riau can be used as a consideration in choosing the topics or materials for the training. The in-service training mentioned above was conducted by the Riau provincial government attended by 55 teachers from 20 Elementary Schools in Rokan Hulu District (Bambang, 2011). The similarity of

this in-service training and an in-service training being developed in this research is that the trainees are both groups of teachers teaching English in Elementary School who have little experience and knowledge in teaching English for young learners. They run seven-days training with the objectives to give basic knowledge and understanding of teaching English, English curriculum, and English teaching methodology.

To achieve those objectives, the materials given to the trainees were related to theories on how children learn a language, how to develop and implement the curriculum and materials about English teaching methodologies. A research conducted to evaluate the in-service training above gained conclusions that the training was highly effective in increasing the trainees (teachers) confidence and motivation in teaching English but it effectively improved their basic English knowledge which is considered as the most important aspect for being effective EFL teachers. It also mentioned that the trainees would benefit more by getting basic English skill first before getting more knowledge or theories about teaching English. The trainees had also mentioned their need to more specifically improve their communicative skill to deliver the materials or to conduct the teaching and learning activities in the class. In other words, these teachers need to be given and trained on how to use classroom language.

Studying from the in-service training done in Riau as described above, the in-service training being developed here will focus more on improving the trainees' general English (70%) and practical teaching skill (30%). The researcher took this proportion with the consideration to get the same benefit as the related research

discussed above and to get the more beneficial result by focusing more on basic English skill as requested by the trainees. The practical teaching skill provided in this in-service training is related to the classroom language commonly used in language classes. As known that English is a local content subject in Elementary Schools which consequently there is no clear standard for which level of skill the teachers should have. In taking topics and skills for the general English skill materials for the in-service training being developed (70%) the researcher is interpreting the basic competence and indicators listed for Elementary Schools students in Permendiknas no 22, 2006. The topics are taken from those basic competences. The reason for taking this into account is that logically the teachers should master at least what are listed as things the students should be able to know by the end of their study in Elementary Schools.

Moreover, for the procedures of the training, some teaching methods are going to be used in delivering the materials of the training. Knowing that the aim of studying English in Elementary School is for preparing the students for a higher level of education and focusing more on speaking ability, so the methods used are all intended to improve their English skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Some aspects of pronunciation are also included. Besides that, some common phrases of classroom language are also added to the training materials. For the classroom language, the phrases and the categories are taken from British Council Classroom Language training (British Council, 2010) and Jane Willis' (2006) proposed Activity-based Language Learning at Primary Level. All those materials are integrated with each meeting

employing a teaching procedure such as PPP (presentation, practice, production) or using task-based learning. All of the training procedures are described precisely in the notes for the trainer.

Coming to the assessment aspect, since the specific goals for this in-service training are to improve the trainees General English focusing on speaking so an on-going – evaluation is considered to be the suitable one. The form of the assessment is given to the trainer to be filled with the notes related to trainees' performances during the training. In general, the assessment form will only cover the activities in the training room during the training session. The other aspects after the training such as the trainee's changing behaviour such as the improvement of the trainees' confidence and motivation are not assessed.

### **Expert validation**

One of the most important steps in the R&D cycle is expert validation. In this stage, all of the materials used in the in-service training, the procedures and activities developed and also the assessment has been created are going to be validated by the expert. The expert scrutinized each aspect of the products to see whether or not the product can answer or reach the objectives of the in-service training being developed. To validate the products, the experts are guided by the expert validation checklist and notes. These checklists are developed by the researcher and are consulted to the advisors before their use. These two experts are going to validate the product. The experts are chosen from one of the lecturers in Graduate School of English Language Education, State University of Malang and an independent trainer from a reputable International Language School.

This considering that the lecturers in this graduate school and the trainer from reputable International Language School are qualified trainers and have the experiences needed to give their feedback and professional opinion. The feedback given by the experts is then analyzed and used to revise the products (in-service training material, procedures, and assessment).

### **Revision based on expert validation**

The revision in this stage is mainly based on the experts' feedback. Their feedback, professional opinion and suggestions are then implemented in the revision. Guided by the feedback given by the experts, the revision can be only about a little aspect like the fonts used in the text or might be quite basic ones such as the choice of the text or the media used. After the revision, the products (in-service training material, procedures, and assessment) are ready to be tried in the try out stage.

### **Try out**

As the in-service training materials, procedures, and assessment have been validated by the experts and have also been revised, the products are then ready to be validated empirically by trying them out to the subjects. For this tryout stage, a trainer is needed and the researcher will be the trainer mentioned. After having the trainer the next step is choosing the subjects for the tryout. As mentioned in the background of the study, this study is mainly intended to improve the teachers teaching English in Elementary Schools in Kecamatan Donomulyo so the subjects (Elementary School teachers) are taken from the schools in this Kecamatan. Some teachers are intended to be taken as subjects from Gugus

5 Desa Sumberoto. The procedure for taking the subject is through voluntary sampling. The researcher is going to announce the try out stage to the teachers in this Gugus (school cluster) and will take 12 or fewer teachers from them. Higher chances are given to those teachers who have been observed and interviewed for the preliminary study and the need-assessment and need analysis stage.

Getting set with the trainer and trainees, the following step is preparing the instruments for the tryout. The data needed in the tryout is the data which can show the researcher whether or not the trainees can achieve the goals that have been set, or whether or not the training material and procedures can help the trainees in achieving the goals. Those aspects are better portrayed by the field notes. The other files needed for the trying out are the documentary data such as the attendant list for the trainees and the survey open-ended questions used to get the trainees personal feedback about the training (Appendix 8). Due to the tight schedule the researcher has for this research, the try out is planned to take only one meeting. The field notes that have been written and the feedback written in the training evaluation are all analyzed and used for revising the products.

### **Revision based on try out**

Since it will be the last revision before the products become the final products, more careful and systematic revision is needed. The data collected in the field notes will contribute to the revising of the material, procedure and assessment viewed from the trainees' responses in the training session. The training assessment is giving valuable information about whether or not the trainees have reached the goals of the in-

service training by the end of each meeting. The feedback from the trainees is also considered to be valuable input for the revision process. This revision stage is expected to give the last touch to the draft before it is presented as a final product.

## **3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

As described in the product specification sub-chapter and training materials development stage, the final product consist of training outline which covers the objective of the training, the training outline, the training materials, the training procedures and the training assessment. The training outline includes the training schedule, topics for each meeting with its specific objective, a short description of the materials, procedures used and assessment. While for the materials, 2 meetings materials which are taken from the topics on general English and classroom language are expected in the final products. The procedures in delivering the procedures and the on-going evaluation form are attached to the trainers training manual. The training manual is the trainees' worksheets which have been completed with some notes for the trainer. The trainees' worksheets are distributed to the trainees during the training.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

The teaching of English in Elementary Schools is leaving us with some facts such as the unavailability of English graduates teachers in Public Elementary Schools and the absence of in-service training. The development of a mini course for teachers teaching English in Elementary Schools using R&D research approach was projected to bridge the gaps by giving the



teachers practical skills and knowledge presented in the mini course. Considering the limitation of this study, qualitative research on teachers' professional development process both personally or officially initiated are needed to get more understanding on how teachers develop their professionalism.

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