

Using Nursery Rhymes in Teaching English for Young Learners at Childhood Education

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Abstract. This study is a literature review that explores the use of nursery rhymes as a teaching tool for young learners in early childhood education. Nursery rhymes, also known as English children's songs, can be an enjoyable way to engage children and foster their interest in learning English. Additionally, singing nursery rhymes can support children's physical-motor, social, emotional, and intellectual development. When selecting nursery rhymes as teaching materials, teachers must consider the appropriateness of the content for the children's age and world, and the potential for the content to encourage discussion and exploration of values and problem-solving skills. The illustrations should also be evaluated for their alignment with the story and appropriateness for the children's age. From a linguistic standpoint, teachers must choose nursery rhymes that are suitable for the children's language level, that facilitate language learning, and that can serve as the basis for activities. While there are challenges associated with selecting and utilizing nursery rhymes as teaching materials, this study suggests that their use can be a valuable tool in the early childhood education classroom.

Keywords: childhood education, nursery rhymes, teaching English, young learners

1 Introduction

Early childhood education (kindergarten) as a form of preschool education participates in the achievement of national education goals [1]. Role as executors in organizing kindergartens that aim to provide a variety of basic skills that are very important to children aged 4 to 6 years in developing attitudes, knowledge, skills, and creativity which will be very necessary for efforts to adapt to the environment, further growth, and development. Starting from the goals of early childhood education and paying attention to the needs and mental development of children at preschool age (4 to 6 years), the implementation of education in early childhood adheres to the principle of playing while learning or learning while playing [1].

Diverse development disciplines are taught by integrating them into a single comprehensive program of learning activities in the form of a Behavior Formation Program and a Basic Capability Development Program. Behavioral shaping programs aim to prepare children from an early age possible to develop attitudes and behaviors that are based on moral values Pancasila and Religion. While the basic skills development program is all activities aimed at achieving certain appropriate abilities with the child's developmental stage. This ability includes creativity, thinking, skills, physical abilities, and language. To assist teachers in carrying out various learning activity programs in early childhood education (kindergarten), various themes have been set that can be used as a reference in further development.

For musical activities such as listening to music and singing to be a process that is meaningful for children, then the teacher's ability to develop is needed to plan and implement learning activities [1]. Several important things are related to the teacher's ability, among other things, concerns: (1) the ability to determine the musical experience activities that are appropriate to the learning theme and developmental aspects in kindergarten; (2) the ability to design shapes music experience activities to be carried out; (3) the ability to determine the type of work model music and songs to be used as learning media; and (4) teacher creativity in developing and creating music.

It is believed that music, as one of the essential activities in the implementation of learning in kindergarten, can influence the personal development of children, including their motor development, language development, emotional development, social development, and intellectual development. It means that kindergarten is an important period in patterning a child's language development. The ability to understand the meaning of what is said by others thrived at this time. Children begin to realize that a language is an important tool for communicating and socializing.

Since English has become a global language, more and more individuals are learning it. The significance of English as a global language has prompted individuals to begin learning it as soon as feasible. As an international language, English is very important for the academic world and other fields of life. English is considered important to be introduced to children from an early age such as preschool and childhood because at that age the child is at a golden age so it is easier to receive the material (input). The teacher as a component of the learning process manager needs to understand the framework of early childhood thinking so that learning management can be carried out properly [2]. Learning should be managed in such a way as to create meaningful and enjoyable learning activities.

The teaching of English as a foreign language to young learners necessitates a specialized approach because young students have unique learning styles and features [3]. Therefore, it is appropriate for teachers to teach children English from an early age. A large number of requests for learning English in early childhood poses a challenge for English teachers to recognize the characteristics of children as a guide for teaching early childhood [4]. Most children like and love singing songs. Songs may be used as one of the materials for learning a foreign language [5]. Children who are learning English as a second language (ESL) must have the opportunity to study the language in fun and engaging ways [6].

The use of singing (song) as a learning medium is an effort to create meaningful and fun, "fun" English learning for early childhood. Songs are the most efficient method for learning new vocabulary and enhancing pronunciation [7]. Children benefit greatly from singing with dance because they can follow the movements even if they cannot yet voice the song. Frequently, the manner or performance conveys the meaning or significance of the song. Additionally, the rhythms of children's lullabies will help children recall English terms.

There are several ways to introduce English to early childhood, one of which is through nursery rhymes or English children's songs. Nursery Rhymes are rhyming rhymes found in English children's songs. Repeated words and rhythms follow a certain pattern. While, according to [8], Nursery Rhymes are rhymes that contain a collection of sounds that are well-composed and sounds beautiful. The significance of nursery rhymes to the development of the English language in early childhood is undeniable [9]. Nursery rhymes that are introduced to an early age children do not only use their mother tongue, namely Indonesian but also use foreign languages, for example, English [10].

Some examples of nursery rhymes developed in western countries are "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star", "A Wise Old Owl", and "Dickory Dock". When this, the tradition of singing nursery rhymes was not only dominated by the state west. In Indonesia music was introduced to children through the medium of nursery rhymes, particularly in older children early. In Indonesia alone nursery rhymes are quite well known in the community, for example, the song "Head of Shoulders" (which is an adaptation of the nursery rhyme entitled "Kepala Pundak"), "Topi Saya Bundar", "Burung Kakak Tua", and "Kasih Ibu". Some English children's song titles that can be used as teacher references in choosing and singing songs include: 1) Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, 2) Are You Sleeping, 3) You're Happy to Clap Your Hands, 4) Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes, 5) ABC Alphabet Song, 6) Old MacDonald Had A Farm, 7) My Sunshine, 8) Jhoni Jhoni Yes Papa, 8) One And One, 9) Wheels On The Bus, 10) Walking, Walking, 11) Hockey Pockey, 12) Good Morning, 13) Five Little Monkeys, 14) Mary Had A Little Lamb, 15) We Are Going To The Zoo, 16) Twinkle Twinkle Little Star and many more.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested to describe more about nursery rhymes more. Therefore, the objective of this research is to describe the use of nursery rhymes in teaching young learners in childhood education including the materials, impacts, and challenges.

2 Method

This research applies to library research. Library research is a type of qualitative research method [11]. Library research is a study that collects information and data using various library materials such as documents, books, periodicals, historical narratives, literature, notes, and various related reports. In this case, a literature study is used to obtain data based on conceptual facts and theoretical facts, not based on the researcher's perception.

The method of collecting data using documentation. The kind of documents are taken from books, and articles journals both from national and international journals related to the use of nursery rhymes in teaching English. The method of analyzing data using content analysis. Content analysis is used to get valid inferences and can be re-examined based on the context. in this analysis process of selecting, comparing, combining, and sorting out the various meanings until relevant data is found [12].

3 Findings and Discussion

3.1 Teaching English to Young Learners

In several countries, educating children is viewed as an extension of mothering rather than an academic endeavor [13]. Consequently, teachers at the elementary level receive less training, a lesser position, and lower compensation than their colleagues who teach adolescents or adults in the same educational system. Children have a simpler worldview than older children and adults, but this does not indicate that educating them is easy or clear. In contrast, the teacher of children must be highly trained to enter children's worlds and guide their conceptual development toward more formal, complex, and differently organized ideas. Primary teachers must comprehend how children make sense of the world and how they learn; they must be able to analyze learning activities and teach new concepts to groups and classes of children using language.

Teaching languages to children requires all the qualities of a successful primary educator, including the ability to manage children and keep them on target, as well as an understanding of the language, language instruction, and language acquisition. Teaching English to young students differs from teaching English to adults. In teaching English to young students, teachers should take into account the students' qualities of being easily bored but highly active [14]. To overcome these qualities of young learners, the instructor must design engaging classroom activities to stimulate their desire to learn and prevent them from becoming bored. Consequently, the use of nursery rhymes was proposed as a method for teaching English to young students.

Even though the majority of kindergarteners cannot yet read, children at this age have remarkable memory [15]. Children utilize their capacity to memorize and interest in nursery rhymes to model language and fluency. Nursery rhymes are simple traditional songs or poems for children that contain word order and sentence grammar that children can learn [16]. Therefore, we can invite the children to sing together English children's songs. Children can move their hands and limbs while singing to the rhythm and lyrics of the song. In each English children's song with a different title, there are various new English vocabulary words. In addition to being entertained by the melodies and lyrics, children enjoy performing and learning simultaneously. Children will become more familiar with the language and develop a taste for music.

According to Cardany[17] states that nursery rhymes have been a part of childhood for centuries. One of the ways to teach English in early childhood can be by using English children's songs (nursery rhymes). However, All English children's songs are easy to sing and teach early childhood, preschool, and Kindergarten to remember vocabulary and language pronunciation. English is not easy for children. Therefore, songs are included and modified by altering their lyrics and adapting to the conditions and environment so that they are readily accepted by children [18]. By creating and modifying English melodies (nursery rhymes), teachers can teach English to children more effectively through group singing. This is because music provides opportunities to practice patterns, mathematical concepts, and symbolic reasoning, as well as providing entertainment and relieving tedium.

3.2 Creating Nursery Rhymes

According to [18], there are several English children's songs (nursery rhymes) that can be created or modified in teaching in childhood education (Kindergarten) to be used as a medium for introducing English to children. These songs include:

Example 1.

"One, Two and Three" (One, two, three)
One and one, I love my father
Two and two, I love my father
Three and three, I love brothers and sisters
One, two, and three, I love my family

The song above is a modified song from an Indonesian children's song with the original title "one, two, three". The song is very popular among Indonesian children from the past until now. Therefore, teachers modified the song by changing the English lyrics "One, Two, and Three". The values and meanings contained in the song "one, two, and three" are to introduce children to family members including fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters, and to moral messages to love and family. In addition, creating children's songs with the title "one, two, and three" is very easily imitated by children because the lyrics are simple and easy to memorize. Additionally, children are acquainted with the song's tone. This song has been used to convey English to children in Preschool or Playgroup and Kindergarten classes. For example, in kindergarten, instructors introduce the English language by chanting "one, two, and three" nursery rhymes with the children. Teachers typically chant with their students while using repeated body movements (gestures) to appeal to the children's attention and aid in memorization.

Example 2.

The title "Yellow Yellow" (Are You Sleeping)
Yellow Kuning 2x
Red Merah 2x
Blue biru
Green Hijau
Blue biru
Green Hijau
White putih
Black hitam

The above melody is a modified version of the English song "Are you asleep" with altered lyrics. These modifications aim to introduce children to various colors through the English language. Additionally, the lyrics are very basic and easy for children to recite. This color melody has been utilized by Play and Kindergarten in the holy.

Some creations of children's songs (nursery rhythms) above can provide benefits for children which include instilling values, morals, and character, social-emotional development, and cognitive and motor development of children. Furthermore, children's songs can provide stimulation for children to be happy because music and songs are aspects important for early childhood education. This is reinforced by [19] that children feel happy and free to move when listening to music and they are happy with beneficial physical activity for health development.

Related to the introduction of English in early childhood, creations of the English songs above can be used as interesting media for children's interest in learning English which includes vocabulary, pronunciation, and listening. In other words, children who often hear and sing children's songs in English will be richer in vocabulary and able to pronounce vocabulary in English than children who rarely listen and sing English children's songs. Besides, the creation of English children's songs (nursery rhymes) is very useful as a medium for introducing English to young children in childhood school [18]. By signing English children's melodies, children become more enthusiastic and interested in learning the language. Because they are acquiring English vocabulary while singing, they feel less pressured (stressed) during classroom instruction. Through singing, children's development, including physical-motor, social, emotional, and intellectual, can be stimulated to the fullest extent.

3.3 Choosing Material for Nursery Rhymes

Materials are important resources for teachers in assisting students to learn English [20]. In a broader sense, materials might be described as anything that is utilized expressly to increase students' language understanding and experience. In choosing and selecting materials for the teaching practices, we as teachers must take several factors into account, such as whether we must create the materials ourselves, how we can select appropriate materials for our students, how we can adapt the materials to assist our students' learning and the advantages of adapting or creating our learning materials.

Young learners will need to be encouraged to continue studying for around ten years, and they will bring a wide range of language proficiency levels to secondary school [13]. In the learning process, the teacher must be able to adjust to his/her goals, so the right supporting factors are needed to achieve these goals, one of which is the use of appropriate learning media. Songs can be used as an intermediary in learning [21]. By the time they are of school age, the majority of young children are familiar with several well-known nursery rhymes [22].

Nursery rhymes are one such medium that activists can use education to be able to form and develop children's character, especially in early childhood. Children can readily accept nursery rhythms because their melodies are typically brief, basic, and repetitive, their tempo is moderate, and they are performed in the children's intonation range. Moreover, the lyrics of nursery chants typically contain profound meanings while employing language that is easily understood by children.

Even though the majority of kindergarteners cannot yet read, children at this age have remarkable memory [15]. Utilize their capacity to memorize and interest in nursery rhymes to model language and fluency. Teachers of young learners (YLS) often use songs and movement to engage children in the classroom [23]. Typically, young children actively respond to rhythm and melody through bodily movement when listening to music [24]. Children are exposed to the rhythms and patterns of language through the study of nursery rhymes or other basic poetry. When performed, nursery rhymes and poetry also emphasize accurate wording and tempo. Adults can first model nursery rhymes and poetry for students. The majority of students quickly learn nursery rhymes. A further advantage of employing nursery rhymes and poetry is the ability to quickly find resources and books.

In practice, employing teaching materials derived from nursery rhymes makes teaching English to primary school students easier and more engaging since they do not only listen to the teacher present the content but also sing along [25]. The classroom projector is used to broadcast YouTube videos of nursery rhymes and children's music. The video also includes song lyrics so that students would have no trouble singing nursery rhymes. Not-so-rapid nursery rhymes with pleasant melodies are equally enjoyable and easy to listen to. This is what makes it simple for students to comprehend nursery rhymes.

Understanding nursery rhymes are extremely helpful for young children. First, the majority of today's youngsters are unfamiliar with conventional nursery rhymes. These rhymes are frequently mentioned in different forms of writing. Familiarity with conventional rhymes facilitates comprehension when the rhymes or references to rhymes appear in other settings. Second, the majority of nursery rhymes are brief and simple to recall, even if students are unfamiliar with them. It does not take many repetitions for pupils to begin reciting the rhymes themselves. Third, nursery rhymes rhyme. This may seem simple, but rhymes aid with memorizing and give additional reinforcement for concepts such as rhyming words and other textual concepts. Due to the sing-song character of nursery rhymes, students are also instructed on phrasing. To demonstrate this, choose a classic nursery rhyme and attempt to repeat it using incorrect syntax.

3.4 Importance of Using Nursery Rhymes

Numerous educators have recognized that nursery chants can promote the cognitive, physical, social, emotional, and acoustic development of young children in the classroom. In the primary music classroom, nursery chants can be used to create a vibrant and engaging learning environment as well as interdisciplinary learning opportunities [26]. Nursery rhymes provide a unique learning context for preschoolers concerning their emergent literacy and musical development [27]. While, [28] states that Children have been taught English using nursery chants for a long time and numerous reasons, including linguistic, cognitive, affective, and cultural ones.

The importance of using nursery rhymes in the language-learning process has been widely acknowledged, as it helps teachers create a motivating learning environment for their students while simultaneously encouraging them to interact more while listening to the song and then share their thoughts with the assistance of their peers and teacher [29]. It is supported by the statement from [30] that the usage of nursery rhymes can dramatically increase students' enthusiasm for English learning. This study demonstrated that nursery rhymes brought significant pedagogical innovation and encouraged student enthusiasm. Besides, the use of nursery rhymes in the classroom can increase students' involuntary mental repetition, which promotes language learning [31].

The acquaintance of young learners with English through nursery rhymes takes into account the content, students' readiness, and class atmosphere, and that nursery rhymes must teach character education; the strengths in acquainting young learners with English through nursery rhymes at playgroup are the dedication of the manager/organizer, teachers, and parents, as well as the high awareness of English's significance [5]. Nursery Rhymes also improve students' interests, teach positive moral values, get the students more physically active, and can help create a more active and fun learning atmosphere [32].

According to [33], the teaching of nursery rhymes is considered an essential tool for teaching English as a foreign language to young learners in kindergarten through third grade because of the magic of these rhymes, which have several characteristics: they have rhyme and rhythm and can be sung to familiar tunes; they have short, simple, rhyming text that is easy to remember; and they can teach story structure and elements (introduction, conflict, resolution, etc.). They are excellent for teaching basic skills like phonemic awareness (hearing sounds), phonics (working with sounds), word families and/or chunks, syllabification, and syllable division. They can also teach story structure and elements (introduction, setting, plot, and character), are fun for wordplay, extend and enrich student vocabularies, be used for pocket charts, and give most students immediate reading success.

Repeating nursery rhymes with children can help them improve their linguistic and verbal abilities, phonemic awareness, and auditory differentiation [22]. Using nursery rhymes as an instructional strategy in ELT classrooms can be effective in language learning skills and grammatical components. The usefulness of nursery rhymes [34]. Thus, strategic training for teachers in the use of nursery rhymes as an instructional method would increase the efficiency of the learning process. Incorporating nursery rhymes into the instructional design may also assist children's transition from a passive to an active role in the classroom. The teachers may construct activities (Pair/group) around the nursery rhyme that enhance the strengthening of student relationships. Students may be given an assignment based on a nursery rhyme that emphasizes particular aspects of language use.

The benefits of Nursery Rhymes are also related to English skills. In writing skills, [35] that implementing the usage of nursery rhymes to teach writing includes explaining things, introducing a nursery rhyme, playing the song of a nursery rhyme, and helping students to write a text about a nursery rhyme. Furthermore, how everyday exposure

to nursery rhymes affects students' phonological recognition abilities [36]. The statistical analysis concluded that including baby rhymes in lessons helps students' phonemic awareness skills after looking at the eight-week data findings.

In listening skills, the nursery rhymes songs considerably enhanced the students' English listening skills [37]. It shows that nursery rhyme songs are one of the most effective media for enhancing the listening skills of young learners because young learners are enthusiastic about learning English while singing nursery rhyme songs. This is also similar to the statement from [38] about the effectiveness of nursery rhymes as media in teaching listening. There were statistically significant changes and improvements in students' scores between the pre-and post-tests. [39] then states that students responded positively to the use of nursery rhymes as a learning tool for focused listening. It is evident from the results of the questionnaire that practically all of the children respond positively to each statement.

Nursery rhymes help teachers teach and even improve students' new vocabulary. [40] states the effectiveness of nursery rhymes in teaching English vocabulary to students is greater than that of conventional methods. It is similar to [41], [42] that the use of nursery rhyme videos improves students' ability in vocabulary mastery. The use of nursery rhyme videos for teaching vocabulary is better than teaching using the usual method. [43] states the success of employing nursery rhymes to teach vocabulary to students was good since more than half of the students comprehended the vocabulary words provided. This indicates that the use of nursery rhymes to teach vocabulary was effective. [44] explains that nursery rhymes as instruments for language acquisition. Through nursery rhymes, children will be motivated to acquire vocabulary and become more engaged in class. There was also a significant difference in the vocabulary taught with Nursery Rhymes in the pretest and posttest scores [45]–[48]. Students in the experimental group performed significantly better than their counterparts in the control group. These studies suggest that the usage of nursery rhymes might considerably improve students' vocabulary knowledge. This study offers major educational implications and advancements in the use of nursery rhymes to teach English vocabulary. According to [49], utilizing nursery rhymes to improve communication was helpful because the children do not know some words. Nursery rhymes helped expand vocabulary, but they were also helpful in providing a stimulating atmosphere for teaching the children about the various letters and sounds. It is added by [50] that Additionally, nursery rhymes enhance students' alphabet knowledge, permitting them to manipulate letters and their sounds. It was suggested that schools should always teach children nursery rhymes, parents should always play nursery rhyme recordings at home, and parents should also croon with their children to encourage them.

3.5 Consideration of Using Nursery Rhymes

The effectiveness of using nursery rhymes must be determined based on the rhymes' age-appropriateness and relevance to children's worlds, as well as the extent to which they offer material to promote discussion and the exploration of values and offer solutions to a range of issues that kids may encounter daily [28]. Regarding the depiction of characters, their environments, and the activities they engage in, as well as the synchronization of drawings with the narrative, accompanying illustrations should also be considered. Lastly, the criteria for selection from a linguistic standpoint should include the selection of rhymes based on the suitable level of the language employed, the rhymes' potential for language acquisition, and their potential for the creation of activities centered on the rhyme.

Obstacles to using Nursery Rhymes may occur. As stated by [18], the obstacles during learning include the limited attention and concentration of children towards the teacher when teaching English, the limited insight and broad knowledge of teachers in childhood education (Kindergarten) about teaching English, then limited supporting facilities and facilities in learning English. [1] adds that sometimes teachers get difficulties choosing the songs for theme learning. The greatest problem was encountered when teachers attempted to compose songs and lyrics. They may not readily discover the appropriate lyrics to compose a song based on the study materials. Other challenges include matching the phrases to the song's melody and the syllables of the words to the song's melody and sentence. On the other hand, melody teachers struggle with the capacity to distinguish between high and low tones, tone value, and song notation.

4. Conclusion

The creation of English children's songs (nursery rhymes) is an effective way to introduce English to young children in early childhood education. The creation of English songs can be utilized to pique children's interest in learning, increase their enthusiasm for the language, and provide further benefits. Through singing, children's growth, including physical-motor, social, emotional, and intellectual, may be encouraged to the fullest extent. In choosing and selecting materials for the teaching practices, teachers must consider several factors, including whether we must create the materials ourselves, how we can select appropriate materials for our students, how we can adapt the materials to facilitate our students' learning and the benefits of adapting or creating our learning materials. However, the use of Nursery rhymes must be evaluated based on the relevance of their content to children's world and their age-appropriateness, as well as the extent to which they provide material for the encouragement of discussion and exploration of values, as well as the means for children to overcome a variety of everyday problems. Consideration should also be given to the depiction of characters, their surroundings, and their activities, as well as the synchronization of images with the narrative. Lastly, the linguistic selection criteria should include the selection of rhymes based on the appropriate level of the language employed, the rhymes' potential for language acquisition, and their potential for the production of activities concentrated on the rhyme.

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