

English Zone (EZO): A Fun Activity in Learning English Speaking Skill for Young Learners

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Abstract

This research aims to describe the implementation of English Zone (EZO) activities in learning English speaking skills for young learners. Employing qualitative descriptive study, this research included observation of teaching and learning process, and interview that was administered to 10 students from Kampung Sawah, West Hadimulyo. Ten meetings were observed thoroughly. Each observation took place in English language classroom every Sunday at Al-Fatimah Mosque. This research presented the implementation of English Zone (EZO) to young learners and students' responses to the implementation of EZO. The findings illuminated the powerful ways in which EZO was able to improve students' speaking skill. The students were having fun in the classroom which made them actively participate IN speaking practice with their friends or teachers. The findings further highlighted that EZO showed a good result in improving students' confidence during their speaking practice. EZO helped them to speak more and decreased hesitation. They felt more relaxed to speak.

Keywords : English zone, speaking skill, young learners, activity

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INTRODUCTION

In this globalization era, English increasingly become the most worthwhile language to be learnt. As an international language today, English is widely spoken in many countries. Because of the demands of the world, people are not only expected to be able to speak their own language but also expected to be able to speak English. In Indonesia, English is recognized as a foreign language. Therefore, English has become an obligatory subject from junior

high school level up to university level in Indonesia (Abadi, 2015, p. 13).

Speaking is the most important parts to be mastered since our lives can't be separated with communication to the others (Prawerti, 2015, p. 256). Moreover, speaking is also a skill that requires not only linguistic competences but also sociolinguistic competence including the understanding of when, why, and how to produce language to express ideas (Laisouw, 2019, p. 16). In addition, Speaking is used to communicate and

express ideas, feelings, and thoughts. It cannot be denied that the role of humans as social creatures will surely meet and interact with other people, of course a strategy is needed to deliver the messages.

Speaking is a process to convey something about information or others orally and also requires both linguistic and sociolinguistic competence. Speaking can be effective if the learners started their learning from young age. Speaking can be learnt from many ways such as through conversation, speech, game and other activities where all the participants will speak English in certain place and time. Teaching speaking is a great challenge for every teacher, especially in teaching English as foreign language (Abdulah, 2019, p. 46). Therefore, the teachers have to use interesting techniques in order the students will be motivated.

Teaching English for young learners is very crucial since the earlier learn foreign language, the greater chances for language proficiency. It is supported by Fromkin (cited in Negara et al., 2014, p. 2) who stated that young learners before the age of puberty who are exposed to more than one language seem to acquire all the languages equally well. There are many bilingual and multilingual speakers who have acquire their languages early in life. If the child is exposed to additional languages at an early age, he or she will learn those languages.

According to Wendy A Scott & Lisbeth H Ytreberg (1995) children can talk about what they are doing, they can tell what they have done or heard, they also can plan activities, they can argue for something and tell you why they think and what they think around the age of 5 to 8. At the age of 8 to 10 years old, there are some characteristics of the children. Children of ten years old are mature children with an adult side and childish side. At this age, their understanding about their surrounding develops. Their basic concepts are formed, and they have very decided view of the world. They can tell the difference between fact and fiction, they ask question all the time, rely on the spoken word as well as the physical world to convey and understanding meaning. They are able to make some decisions about their own learning and have definite views about what they like and do not like doing. They also have been able to develop the sense of fairness about what happen in the classroom and began to ask the teachers' decision, and are able to work with and learn from others.

Prayatni (2019, p. 107) said that teaching English to young learners needs good teaching skills, creativity, preparation, and patient. Teacher must have all those attributes in order the young learners are motivated to learn. Here are some characteristics which distinguish

young learners and adults. First, young learners have a short attention span. Second, young learners are very active, imaginative, and egocentric, Third, young learners love praise and reward. Fourth, young learners are less shy than older learners. Fifth, young learners enjoy imitating and learning through playing, acting, making and doing. Sixth, young learner develop doing physically, mentally, and conceptually.

English Zone (EZO) is an activity where the learners or participants uses English in a specific place along the time. In Metro, specifically in West Hadimulyo there is a place named Kampung Sawah which held an activity called English Zone (EZO) activity every Sunday. This activity is joined by young learners from nearby house in the village. The students that usually attend were around 20 students with the age range up to 10 to 12 years old. This activity was created by students of English Department of State Islāmic Institute of Metro. They helped the students to be able to speak in English by giving them some practices and theories in English speaking skill. Therefore, this research observed the learning activity through English Zone (EZO).

Based on “*English Zone For Motivating Students To Speak*” written by Rurin Oktaviany S, Luwandi Suhartono, and Iwan Supardi, English Zone Activity

can motivate the students to be more active to speak English. The data reveals that 76.37% students are motivated to speak in English. Among to the instrumental motivation, intrinsic motivation, integrative motivation, extrinsic motivation, and resultative motivation, the students showed high percentage of instumental motivation (43.21%) categorized as moderate.

Moreover, according to “*Efektivitas English Zone dalam Meningkatkan Kemampuan Berbicara Bahasa Inggris Mahasiswa di IAIN Curup*” written by Eka Apriani, Sakut Anshori, and Sarwo Edy, speaking skills significantly increased with a value of 74.12 or 11.56%, in implementing English Zone. This study revealed that there were many problems faced by the students, such as the limitation for the students to talk, difficulty in finding speaking partners, students’ embarrassment in starting conversation, knowledge of grammatical rules, and eagerness to speak English. Only a few lecturers who consistently speak English and the lack of penalty for those who break the rule (Apriani et al., 2019).

Based on two articles above that use quantitative analysis, our paper focuses more on qualitative analysis. This paper aims to describe a fun activity in learning English for young learners. This research is important because in this era we need to

speak English fluently. To have a successful beginning to speak English, teaching English for young learners especially speaking skill plays a significant role because they appear to be fast learners than adult. Speaking skill that are taught at a young age will remain strong by the time they are growing. It means that they will have a better speaking skill than the one that start their speaking when they are adult.

METHOD

The design of this research was qualitative descriptive study. This research fulfills the basic requirement of a qualitative method research by understanding human or social phenomena (Creswell & Clark, 2007). This research was reported descriptively regarding the implementation of EZo in English language classroom and student's

The Implementation of English Zone (EZo)

Introducing speaking skills to young learners should be conducted effectively. The experience can help them familiarize with English as a foreign language. Therefore through English Zone (EZo) activity, we emphasized young learners to speak English as much as possible even started from the simplest one. The English Zone (EZo) was held in 90 minutes. The learning procedures that we use are as follows:

perception of the implementation of EZo in accordance with students' speaking skill.

This research was taken through purposive sampling within a population of 20 young learners from West Hadimulyo exactly at Kampung Sawah. The sample was taken among 10 young learners to be analyzed.

Technique of collecting the data was taken from the observation teaching and learning process regarding the implementation of English Zone (EZo) activity which was being held at Al-Fatimah Mosque every Sunday. The data was also taken from interview of 10 young learners. The researchers described information about the implementation of English Zone (EZo) elaborated with the young learners' responses toward English Zone (EZo) activities.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The first step was *pre-activities*. In this step, the teachers greeted and asked the young learners condition in English because the teachers wanted the young learners to get used to using English. Then, the teachers checked the young learners' attendance and asked them to respond in English. After that, the teachers gave them an ice breaking in order to catch students' attention to the teachers and the materials. This can make the young learners have more fun and excited. It was a good start to initiate the learning process.



Picture 1. The teachers greeted the young learners

The second step was *whilst activities*. The teachers reviewed the lessons from the previous meeting. The next was the core of learning or materials on that day. The teachers engaged young learners with physical activities by coordinating commands, speech, movement and writing. The initial instructions were given in the form of writing, in order to record the material that had been conveyed in learning. In the implementation, the teachers provided examples to young learners with the total physical response (TPR) method, then they trained to directly practice it in turns. In learning process, the teachers usually sang a simple English song as follows:

Table 1. List of songs

No.	Day/ Date	Title of Song
1.	Sunday, 05 of January 2020	The Alphabet Song
2.	Sunday, 12 of January 2020	Greeting Song
3.	Sunday, 19 of January 2020	Days of The Weeks

4.	Sunday, 26 of January 2020	Days and Months
5.	Sunday, 02 of February 2020	What Is This?
6.	Sunday, 09 of February 2020	What Are You Doing?
7.	Sunday, 16 of February 2020	Colors Song
8.	Sunday, 23 of February 2020	Fruits Song
9.	Sunday, 01 of March 2020	Family Song
10.	Sunday, 08 of March 2020	Head Shoulders Knees and Toes

The teachers gave an example in singing the song both from word and gestures. After young learners saw and listened to the song, they were asked to practice it together. They were asked to do it one more time. It can help them to easily remember the materials in the song. So, the young learners can improve their speaking well. After that, the teachers gave an example of simple conversation related to the materials in the song.



Picture 2. The young took a note of the material

The teachers provided the example how to say English word in the conversation. Then, the teachers asked the young learners to come forward to perform the conversation with their friends. It aimed to improve their speaking skill and improve their confidence.

The last step was *post activities*, after all the young learners have finished practicing the conversation, the teachers provided an evaluation related to learning material. The teacher asked the young learners if they had difficulties to comprehend the material given. The

teachers also provided a fun game to the students. The fun game was related to improve young learners' speaking skills. It aimed to keep young learners feeling energized and excited even though they have been studying all day. So, the young learners will be more enthusiastic and energized to get involved in English Zone (EZO) activity on the next meeting. The teachers closed the learning by giving motivation to young learners in order to make the students felt more enthusiastic in learning English.



Picture 3. The young learners were participated in fun games

The young learners' responses to English Zone (EZO) Activity

The data was gathered from interview which was administered to 10 students. After transcribing the interview, it was found that most of the young learners' responses to English Zone (EZO) were positive. The students showed their enthusiasm and interest during the learning process. Most of the young learners enjoyed to participate actively because of the learning atmosphere. It brought English into the classroom. So, they became accustomed to it and can easily increase their ability in speaking. Some of students' responses to EZo were presented below:

Researcher : *What is your opinion about EZo?*

Young Learner 1: "..... English Zone (EZO) makes learning more fun..."

Young Learner 2: "..... I love learning English, English is easy...."

Young Learner 3: "..... Learning English with playing games is really fun..."

Young Learner 4: "..... I am happy study with English Zone...."

Young Learner 5: "..... English Zone helps us to speak English more confidently..."

Young Learner 6: ".... Learning with games make me unconcentrated...."

Young Learner 7: "..... I love speaking English everyday...."

Young Learner 8: ".....the teachers in English Zone (EZO) are very friendly and patient in teaching ..."

Young Learner 9: "..... English Zone (EZO) makes me enjoy learning English with my friends...."

Young Learner 10: "..... Because of English Zone (EZO), now, I am diligent to practice speaking....."

In summary, mastering speaking skills were not easy because as English Foreign Language (EFL) learners, they have limited time to practice their speaking. Mostly learners were afraid, shy, and anxious to speak English. Nevertheless, English Zone (EZO) motivated them to speak more because English Zone (EZO) can make the classroom became more enjoyable and relaxing.

Furthermore, English Zone (EZO) can be used as a place where young learners learn to develop their ability in speaking. English Zone (EZO) is a community that can make them easier to practice or develop their basic language skill by getting used to conversations in English without getting afraid of making mistake when they spoke since there were tutors or friend who were ready to help.

In addition, the young learners felt that they were being heard and appreciated in English Zone (EZO). They were not being underestimated by the tutor even though they make many mistakes. When they make mistakes the tutors neither pause nor correct them immediately. The tutors took a note of their mistakes and gave feedback in the end of the meeting.

English Zone (EZO) was also designed to improve young learners' speech, and allows the young learners to find their English speaking partner. English Zone (EZO) was also a community for young learners to boost their confidence in speaking. It is similar with English language training zone which facilitate the students to improve their English grammar skill. In teaching and learning process, the tutor in English Zone (EZO) delivered the materials informally. It made them easier to understand the material but they could still focus on the basic skills.

Nevertheless, English Zone (EZO) also has disadvantages. First, not many of the young learners were able to use their sensory in learning process. Sometimes there are some students who could not concentrate when there was music or sound around them. Second, it needed more tutors who taught English in English Zone (EZO). There were so many young learners who joined English Zone (EZO) activity. Lack number of tutors made the learning process became less effective.

CONCLUSION

Based on the finding and discussion, the researchers make conclusion as follows: 1) The implementation of English Zone (EZO) were conducted for 10 meetings. In each meeting, the teachers divided into three steps, namely pre activities, whilst activities and post

activities. 2) Young learners' responses to the implementation of English Zone (EZO) are positive. From ten (10) young learners that the researcher interviewed and analyzed, it was found that they were able to improve their speaking skills after participating in English Zone (EZO). They became a good participant in practicing their speaking with their friends or teachers in English Zone (EZO). The young learners had a good level of confidence. They were able to give their opinion and asked questions from the material of speaking performance with their friends. English Zone (EZO) motivated young learners to speak more because English Zone (EZO) could make the young learners enjoyed the learning process and made them more relaxed. They were not underestimated by the tutor even though they did so many mistakes. In conclusion, English Zone (EZO) was a fun activity to help young learners learn English.

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