

Stakeholder Engagement and Technological Support in Advancing English Language Competence of Early Childhood Teachers

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ABSTRACT

Improving early childhood English competency is crucial, as it impacts their role as language models and facilitators of children's language development. Technological support offers an approach to enhancing teachers' English proficiency and pedagogical practices. This research aims to analyze the effect of stakeholders on strengthening early childhood teachers' English proficiency through technological support. This study uses a quantitative survey research design that can be a quantitative descriptive design with a cross-sectional approach. The sample in this study was early childhood students and stakeholders, who were determined using the purposive sampling technique. The data collection techniques used are questionnaires, interviews, and documentation. Data is then analysed descriptively. The involvement of stakeholders, especially school principals, supervisors, and education policy makers, plays an important role in improving the English language skills of pre-school teachers through programs: English curriculum integration, selection process through English interviews, Internship in bilingual schools, English extracurricular activities and optimal use of technology in the learning process. Technology tools play a crucial role in developing basic English language skills like listening, reading, speaking, and writing for early childhood teacher.

Keywords: early childhood, technology, English skills, stakeholders

INTRODUCTION

One of the 21st-century teacher competencies socialized by the Ministry of Education and Culture (2017) often called 4C is communication. English has been established as an international language to communicate globally. The world of education is currently closely related to the use of English as a language of communication, which also has an impact on Early Childhood Education (ECED). The use of English as a language of communication in schools is more common in international private kindergartens but some national private kindergartens also introduce English to their students even though only simple vocabulary (Bento & Portugal, 2019; Broughman, 2024). Communication between students and teachers and students with other students can facilitate in mastering English (Baracheta, 2024; Eom, 2024).

So, the ability of English as a language of communication becomes a basic need that must be mastered by students as prospective educators (Kuhon, 2020; Lionardo & Thamrin, 2023). General work skills through English as a second communication language or additional language are highly valued by employers. Permendikbud No. 3 of 2020 concerning National Education Standards article 15 is a government policy that provides opportunities for students in the learning process both from within the study program and from outside the study program to learn to prepare themselves to enter the world of work, one of which is English communication.

However, not all teachers have the ability to communicate in English. Based on input from the principal of the partner school where early childhood students carry out internships or work practices, they said that the English communication skills of early childhood students were not by the needs of the world of work. The principal of the partner school said that when graduates are accepted as teachers, the school must assist in English language skills for some time. In pronouncing English vocabulary, graduates also still experience problems because they are rarely used so they are often inappropriate in their pronunciation. Facilitating communication also requires mastery of

vocabulary. The more vocabulary one has, the more fluent one will be in communicating (Lionardo & Thamrin, 2023; Nguyen & Burri, 2024). However, the facts in the field show that the English vocabulary of early childhood graduates is still not appropriate so when communicating it becomes not smooth.

English is important for early childhood graduates even though it is not mentioned in the early childhood curriculum (Broughman, 2024). Interviews with early childhood alumni who have worked in international early childhood institutions in Semarang City stated that teachers who have communication skills in English are a must-have because the language is the daily communication at school. Meanwhile, alumni at a private national school (Islamic kindergarten) in Semarang city stated that teachers' English communication skills are important because schools are preparing to add learning content for early childhood English competencies. The additional learning content is a form of input and support from the school foundation and parents.

Early childhood teachers face significant challenges in using English effectively with young learners, primarily due to limited English proficiency, lack of confidence, and unsupportive environments (Almusharraf, 2024; Baracheta, 2024). However, improving teachers' English competency is crucial, as it impacts their role as language models and facilitators of children's language development (Hidayati, 2018). Technology offers transformative potential in supporting the development of English language proficiency among early childhood teachers. Digital tools such as interactive language learning platforms, mobile applications, and virtual simulations provide flexible and engaging environments for educators to improve their skills (Dalte et al., 2017; Van Der Westhuizen & Hannaway, 2021). Additionally, technology enables continuous professional development through online training modules, real-time feedback systems, and access to global educational resources (Allehyani & Alfayez, 2024; Snell et al., 2019). By integrating technology into teacher training programs, institutions can ensure more personalized, scalable, and sustainable approaches to language enhancement.

Technology offers numerous opportunities to enhance English language teaching for early childhood educators. By leveraging digital tools, AR, digital storytelling, and gamification, teachers can create more engaging and effective learning environments (Redondo et al., 2020; Rulyansah et al., 2023). However, to fully realize these benefits, it is crucial to provide adequate training and resources for teachers and involve parents in the learning process. Utilizing technology in teacher training and stakeholder collaboration can significantly enhance the effectiveness of English language programs (Elmahdi et al., 2025; Gilakjani, 2017). Platforms that enable virtual mentoring, digital resource sharing, and data-driven monitoring allow stakeholders to provide timely support and targeted interventions. As a result, technology becomes an enabler of efficient management and continuous language development for early childhood educators.

Stakeholder theory talks about the involvement of stakeholders in the organization. Stakeholder theory can be applied to education because educational organizations have an important role in society (Marchant et al., 2019; Sharpe, 2014). Organizations at the higher education level also need stakeholder involvement to adjust to the needs of users in the world of work or the industrial world. Stakeholder involvement both internally and externally can affect the strategies and policies to be carried out, the quality of education, and the process of relationships between stakeholders. When stakeholder relations are ignored, it will lead to low quality at the higher education level. This research aims to analyze the effect of stakeholders on enhancing early childhood teachers' English proficiency through outdoor learning programs and child-centred activities. This research aims to analyze the effect of stakeholders on strengthening early childhood teachers' English proficiency through technological support.

METHOD

Research design

This study uses a quantitative survey research design that can be a quantitative descriptive design with a cross-sectional approach (data collected in one specific time or period) to measure the relationship between existing variables. This design aims to determine the level of English proficiency of early childhood teachers before and after participating in the outdoor learning program, as well as the role of stakeholders in supporting the implementation of child-based activities. The sample in this study was early childhood students and stakeholders, who were determined using the purposive sampling technique.

Data Collection

The data collection techniques used are questionnaires, interviews, and documentation to get a real picture of conditions in the field to sources or informants. All instruments used have been validated by experts and declared valid. The instruments used are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Questionnaire fo Early Childhood Students

No	Questions
1	Does your school require you to have English communication skills?
2	Does your school introduce English to children?
3	Do you think English needs to be taught to early childhood students?
4	Do you experience difficulties when teaching in class using English?
5	What do you do to overcome difficulties when teaching in class using English?
6	Are you given opportunities by the school to improve your English communication skills?
7	Are you allowed to develop teaching materials in English?
8	Do the materials provided during your studies sufficiently support your English communication skills?
9	Do you collaborate with others when teaching in English?
10	Can you respond when communicating in English?
11	Do you feel calm when communicating in English with students?
12	Do your students have a background in communicating in English?
13	When you speak English, can your students understand you?

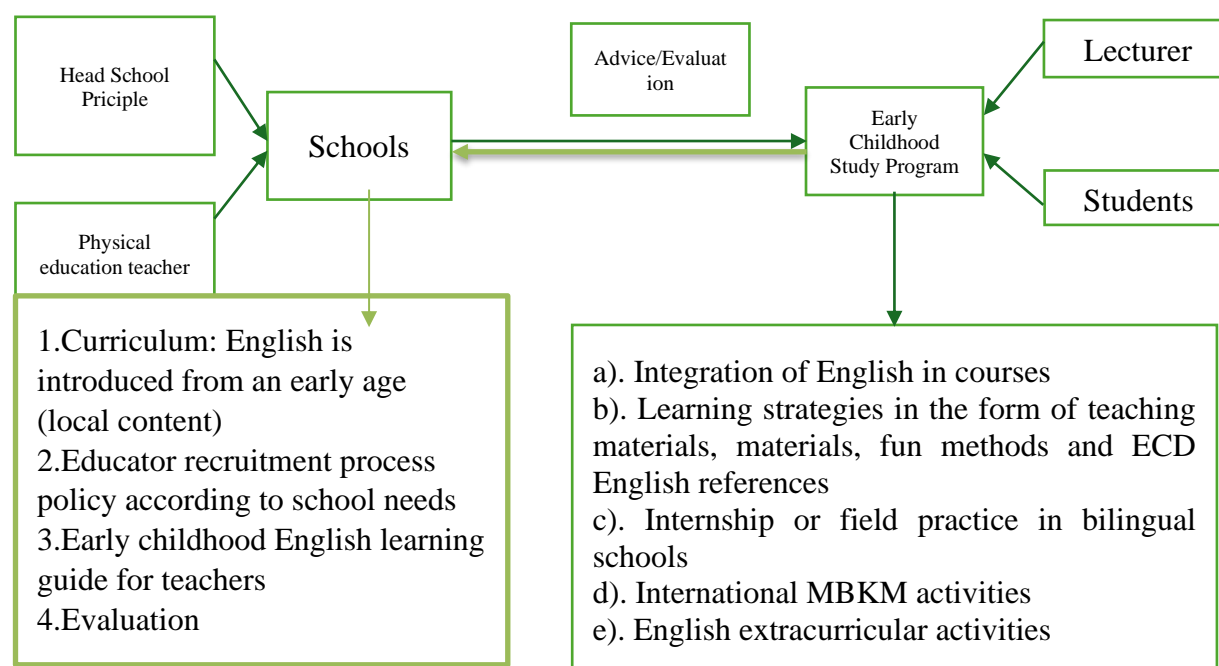


Figure 1. Research Design

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Data Analysis

The data was then analyzed using descriptive analysis techniques to describe the findings in detail.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Effect of Training Program on Teachers' English Proficiency

Field experience practice (PPL) can be an effective form of outdoor learning activities to train early childhood education students in developing their English language skills. This field experience practice provides an opportunity for students to directly engage in learning activities outside the formal classroom, where they can interact with children in a more natural and contextualized context. Based on research conducted by Marchant et al., (2019), outdoor learning activities can improve language skills, both for children and educators, due to more intensive and authentic interaction with the surrounding environment.

For early childhood students, PPL allows them to practice English in real situations, such as giving instructions, communicating with children, and explaining activities done outside the classroom, so that their English skills develop in contexts relevant to ECD teaching. In addition, outdoor learning creates a more relaxed and less formal environment, thus increasing students' confidence to use English in daily communication (Baracheta, 2024; Mustafa et al., 2018). Through children's activity-based teaching that focuses on outdoor exploration and play, students can utilize the situation to enrich vocabulary and improve English fluency, especially in the context of instruction related to motor and cognitive activities. Therefore, the PPL not only provides an opportunity for students to hone their pedagogical skills but also strengthen their English language abilities in the context of early childhood education.

The indicators used in English communication are understanding, pleasure, influence on attitudes, good relationships and actions. The indicator of understanding in students is 64% when communicating in English. For teachers, the understanding is 78% when communicating in English. For understanding on the principal as a policy maker by 21% on the demand for English language skills as one of the qualifications of educators.

The pleasure indicator for students is 50% through the experience of students communicating in English. For teachers, the pleasure indicator is 52% through teachers feeling calm when communicating in English with students. On the principal, the pleasure indicator is 8%, namely English becomes the language of daily communication. The indicator of influence on student attitudes is 71%, namely when communicating in English can respond with the same language. In teachers by 73% in responding to learning opportunities to improve English skills provided by school institutions. While the principal has a value of 58% through the policy of developing themes in the English version.

Indicators of good relationships in students amounted to 43% through relationships or collaboration with other parties to improve English language skills. For teachers, a good relationship is shown by 100% with the closeness between teachers and students. For school principals, a good relationship is shown through partnerships with the early childhood study program or other institutions by 70%. Action indicators on students are shown by increasing study hours to improve English language skills by 64%. For teachers, the action indicator is 66%, namely when the teacher speaks in English, the students can respond. The action indicator on the school principal is 25%, namely the school institution builds cooperation with other institutions to improve English language skills for educators and students.

English communication skills of students can partly understand in communicating but some do not understand (Baracheta, 2024). Students feel happy when they can communicate in the English version when dealing with native speakers or in activities organized by Prodi/University or other institutions outside the campus. When students do not understand, they will use the google translate application and increase their English learning hours. Early childhood educators in institutions can partially communicate in English, they will use the application or prepare appropriate notes and learning media when teaching in English. Principals as policymakers in schools provide opportunities for teachers to hone their educators' English communication skills through several policies, namely: training, attending additional hours, using applications and digital media.

The results of interviews conducted with 5 principals whose institutions use English showed that 3 schools already use English as the language of daily communication between teachers and students. While the other 2 schools use English still at the level of introducing or learning. The policy of using English as a means of daily communication cannot be separated from the curriculum used in these institutions, namely the International Early Years Curriculum (IEYC), Cambridge and Montessori. While the use of the national curriculum to apply to Indonesian, PPKN, and religion lessons. School involvement in the early childhood study program is not only in the process of curriculum preparation and development but also in several activities, for example as a partner school for teaching practice for students or teaching practitioners. School institutions as graduate users also have expectations of early childhood graduates to accommodate the needs of human resources who are proficient in English, for example in schools that use English as a language of communication prefer graduates from the English Education study program rather than graduates of the early childhood study program.

The results of interviews with early childhood Study Program as an education provider for prospective early childhood D educators in determining graduate competencies through the formulation of learning outcomes consider aspects of the needs of several stakeholders, namely: schools, communities and the development of science and technology in accordance with the needs and characteristics of students. In reviewing the curriculum, the early childhood study program also harmonizes with the Indonesian early childhood association (APG PAUD). The development of the early childhood study program curriculum cannot be separated from the role of the faculty as an internal stakeholder in improving curriculum documents (Bento & Portugal, 2019; Nah & Lee, 2016).

The Role of Stakeholders in Supporting Early Childhood Teacher

Indicators of stakeholder roles used are evaluators, participants, partners, experts and change agents (Marshall, 2018). Students as one of the internal stakeholders, have a role as evaluators in learning activities, namely monitoring and evaluation which is carried out twice each semester. The involvement of teachers as evaluators was 56% in providing feedback. The involvement of the principal as an evaluator is 63% in providing feedback on the quality of early childhood study program graduates. Indicators of stakeholder roles as participants in students amounted to 86% through the learning process and monitoring and evaluation of learning. Teachers also act as participants by 64% through the involvement of curriculum development in the early childhood study program. The principal as a participant in the preparation of the early childhood Study Program curriculum was 42%.

The partner/expert indicator in students is 86%, namely actively involved in activities organized by the Study Program / University. Teacher involvement as a partner/co-creator/expert is 52% in collaborating with other parties when teaching English to children. The role of the principal is 63% in the involvement of early childhood study programs in implementing educational service programs in school institutions. Indicators of change agents in students amounted to 64% in student self-development activities. The role of teachers as agents of change is 80% in self-development activities. The role of the principal as an agent of change is 96% by providing opportunities for educators to conduct self-development.

Student involvement in the early childhood study program in monitoring and evaluation activities carried out two or three times a semester. The results of monitoring and evaluation activities will be followed up by the Quality Assurance Agency both at the Prodi, Faculty and University levels. Students also have involvement in education, research, and community service and conduct cooperative or collaborative relationships with lecturers, study programs or other universities for the student's self-development. The role of the teacher as one of the evaluators is the compiler and developer of the curriculum within their own institution, for involvement with the early childhood study program only teachers who have additional qualifications such as driving teachers or achievements that are in accordance with the needs of the study program. Teachers also become partners or collaborate to improve their own competence and become student teachers. The principal as a policy maker within his school institution has a role in providing input to the early childhood study program regarding the needs of educators needed, as a vehicle for students to practice teaching, as well as input for curriculum development in the early childhood study program.

Stakeholders in higher education are internal stakeholders consisting of students, study programs, lecturers, faculties and universities; while external stakeholders consist of graduates, partner schools, parents, communities and governments (Marshall, 2018). Student engagement including academic and non-academic activities is an important

indicator of education quality (Blanchet-Cohen & Elliot, 2011; Marchant et al., 2019). Students as one of the internal stakeholders provide input in monitoring and evaluation activities carried out twice a semester. The results of this monitoring and evaluation are used as a tool to ensure the process is achieved and can be evaluated for sustainability improvement. Stakeholder relationships are important in quality audits, and stakeholders should be involved in their implementation (Kettunen, 2015).

Internal stakeholders such as students and faculty, have a direct relationship as they participate and contribute more actively to the goals of the institution (Erjavec, 2021). External stakeholders such as school institutions, alumni, communities, and parents present a very diverse and complex set of needs, including different and competitive needs in some situations (Langrafe et al., 2020). Stakeholders' information needs must be met and communication with stakeholders must be systematic. Relationships with stakeholders must meet quality criteria. Stakeholders who have a mutually beneficial relationship are likely to continue cooperation with the institution (Kettunen, 2015). Knowledge and information sharing, mutual trust, involvement in the decision-making process and alignment of stakeholders' interests in the strategic planning process, all of which create more value for organizations (Langrafe et al., 2020).

Technological Support for Teaching English

The integration of technology into English language teaching for early childhood educators presents significant opportunities to enhance both pedagogical effectiveness and learner engagement. Digital tools such as interactive applications, learning management systems (LMS), augmented reality (AR), digital storytelling, and gamified learning modules offer immersive environments that support language acquisition in a more interactive and meaningful way (Indriani & Suteja, 2023; Redondo et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2023). These technologies not only cater to diverse learning styles but also enable teachers to create personalized and context-rich learning experiences for young children. Digital storytelling empowers teachers to combine visuals, audio, and narrative structures to build linguistic comprehension and vocabulary in a playful and emotionally resonant manner (Indriani & Suteja, 2023). Gamification strategies, such as reward systems, challenges, role-playing and further stimulate learner motivation and cognitive engagement.

The integration of technology in early childhood education for enhancing English language skills has shown positive outcomes. Teachers generally have favorable attitudes towards using technology in classrooms and have attempted to incorporate it into learning activities (Lestari & Zaman, 2017; Sutiyono et al., 2022). Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools play a crucial role in developing basic English language skills like listening, reading, speaking, and writing (Gunuç & Babacan, 2017). The use of technology can accelerate learning, reduce costs, and provide effective learning experiences (Gunuç & Babacan, 2017; Rintaningrum, 2023). However, challenges exist, such as maintaining children's attention and selecting appropriate technology. ICT integration in early English education can expand children's knowledge, social life, and prepare them for international competition. Students in Vietnam have shown positive perceptions towards ICT use in English reading instruction, although they face barriers like lack of resources and technical support (Hong, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis, Field experience practice (PPL) can be an effective form of outdoor learning activities to train early childhood education students in developing their English language skills. The indicator of understanding in students is 64% when communicating in English. For teachers, the understanding is 78% when communicating in English. For understanding on the principal as a policy maker by 21% on the demand for English language skills as one of the qualifications of educators. The involvement of the principal as an evaluator is 63% in providing feedback on the quality of early childhood study program graduates. Indicators of stakeholder roles as participants in students amounted to 86% through the learning process and monitoring and evaluation of learning. Teachers also act as participants by 64% through the involvement of curriculum development in the early childhood study program. The principal as a participant in the preparation of the early childhood Study Program curriculum was 42%. Technology tools play a crucial role in developing basic English language skills like listening, reading, speaking, and writing for early childhood teacher.

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