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**COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY IN THE INNOVATION OF ENGLISH
LEARNING MODEL
AT LOW-GRADE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT**

(Honest Ummi Kaltsum, M.Hum)

Abstract

Teaching English for children should be enjoyable and interesting. In doing so, there should be a learning model which accomodates the needs for children from the psychological aspect. This article presents an experience of observing whether english language learning model pays attention on cognitive psychology aspect of low grade elementary school students. The design and observation of this research are part of qualitative descriptive research project that focuses on cognitive psychological aspect in the implementing learning model of English subject at low grade Elementary School. The project involves one private elementary school on third grade. This research finds that despite the learning model does not pay attention on the students character completely, the learning model itself has payed attention on cognitive psychology fully

Keywords: cognitive psychology – learning model – low grade

A.Background

Up to now, teaching English, especially at primary school in Indonesia has totally been encouraged. This effort is geared to familiarize pupils with English at an early stage or in the low grade. Almost all elementary schools located both in urban areas and countryside in particular conductig English teaching.

It has been 11 years that English teaching is run since the Decree of Minister of Education and Culture Number 060/U/1993 regarding English as a local content subject matter starting from the fourth grade was issued (Suyanto, 2004) in Widodo (2005: 235)

As English language achieves its prominence at elementary schools, English is taught commencing from the first grade. For this reason, English teachers who are concerned with teaching children should be aware of the nature of their psychology, particularly cognitive psychology.

So far, English teachers have been experiencing difficulty in teaching children since they are less sufficient especially in the implementing appropriate teaching methods and in learning models, where both of them must take notice on the

needs of children cognition and characters. Teaching English to Young Learner involves more than merely teaching the language. Both the social and cognitive development of learners as well as the linguistic need to be taken into account (Fauziati, 2010:89)

It is written that conducting English teaching at elementary schools must pay attention on many aspects. One of the aspects is the needs of children cognition and characters. In doing so, the curriculum, syllabus, lesson plan, and material must cover the children cognition and characters. For this reason, this research is implemented to answer the question whether the english learning models for the low grade elementary school students take notices on these aspects.

B. Research Methods

This study used descriptive qualitative research method. Qualitative research methodology has the main purpose to collect descriptive data that describes objects in detail and in-depth research with the intent to develop the concept or understanding of a phenomenon. (Sandjaya and Heriyanto, 2006:49)

Research was conducted with naturalistic phenomenological qualitative approach, using case study design. Core activities of qualitative research in this research is the understanding of the meaning of an action and the events that occurred in the social background of the study. Qualitative research has two main objectives: first, describe and disclose and second illustrate and explain.

Naturalistic qualitative research conducted on the basis of inductive with an emphasis that starts from the specific development of such concepts, insights and understanding derived from forms of existing data, to then lead to the conclusion or the final result (Sukardi, 2006, 11).

To know in detail about the various phenomena of research, this study used case study design. The use of case study design allows researchers to maintain a holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events observed.

The research subjects of this study are classroom teachers, teacher assistant, students and documents review. Information from the required subjects can take the form of verbal and non verbal information, in order to obtain a full and

comprehensive picture of the psychological aspects of cognition in learning and teaching English to elementary students.

Determination of research subjects conducted on the basis of considerations relevant to the purpose of the research.

The data collection techniques of this research use observation, deep interview and documentations. Checking the validity of the data in this study followed the criteria proposed by Moleong (2002:173), namely the degree of confidence (credibility), transferability, dependence (dependability) and certainty (confirmability).

Data analysis in this qualitative research has been done since the beginning of the research activities until the end of the study. In this way data analysis is expected to have consistency in its entirety. To present these data for more meaningful and easily understood, then the step of data analysis used in this research is the Interactive Model Analysis of the Miles and Huberman that divides the activities of the analysis into several parts, namely: data collection, grouping according to variables, reduction data, data presentation, separating the outlier data and drawing

C. FINDINGS

1. Curriculum

As we know, the low grade curriculum uses a thematic approach. Similarly, the subjects of English, also conform with the current theme. Thus it can be said that the curriculum accommodates the needs of children characters and cognition. Still related to curriculum, curriculum with a thematic approach allows the implementation of the learning process that provides instructional materials commensurate with the child's development. Why thematic curriculum? Because it is interactive, learner-centered, meaningful, and interesting (Cadavid, 2003: 85). When the observation took place, in the process of learning the English language subjects, students are not getting the opportunity to interact and communicate with other students. This is because, at that time, the learning model using direct instruction. Despite using direct instruction, most students are actively involved.

2. Materials

The teacher use a textbook in accordance with children cognition stage, meaning that the essence of the problem is real, not abstract, making it easily understood by low-grade classroom. The concrete subject matters close to the students daily lives, make students more easily to be able to involve their past experiences with the material being taught. The material taught in the book are varied and involve the four language skills; Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. With a gradual level of difficulty and varied, these textbooks are able to explore the students competence in learning English Language. This can be seen from how the students deliver a critical questions towards the material given. The material in these text books consist of the concrete object, so it is easy to be understood. In the process of learning, real objects are used as a medium. The real object can be taken from the objects in the classroom, the provided picture in the textbook or pictures drawn by the teacher at the board, for example, Food and Drinks. When the material is taught, teachers illustrate at the board.

As noted above, the material being taught is concrete, so it is easy to be understood by the students. Finally, it can be said that the English language material in the books are able to accommodate the needs of the children cognition.

Besides, the materials in the textbooks are able to dig the students curiosity up on something. Moreover, they can stimulate the student's critical thinking.

3. The Learning Model

Learning models for low-grade student should consider their characters. such as, they like moving, learning by playing, engaging directly, working in small groups and allowing students to interact each other. Most activities for young learners should include movement and involve the senses (Scott, 1992:7). At the time of observation, teachers have not applied the learning model that can accommodate low-grade childhood character. The fact that students have tremendous potential. It can be seen from the liveliness of the students when the teacher asks questions. When the teacher asks questions, students respond lively and deliver a critical questions.

4. Learning Strategies

Teacher designs the learning strategies that make students believe in the importance of the subject matter and convince students to apply and absorb the moral messages contained in the subject matter (students not only understand but also apply the principles contained in the material)

C. Conclusion

Teaching English for children has become especially important in recent years. However, it is a fact that many teachers are lack of knowledge on how to deliver an effective teaching learning process. This article efforts to give a solution on this problem. This reserch reveals that the good teaching model innovation must cover not only the physical aspect or appearance but also the children character and cognition.

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