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# TEACHING ENGLISH TO YOUNG LEARNERS THROUGH INDONESIAN - TRANSLATED SONGS

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**Abstract.** As an international language, English is taught and learnt by almost all of the people in the world. In Indonesia for example, English has been introduced since the learners are studying at the elementary school. Even many of the Kindergarten Schools too, have already introduced this language to their students. However, we cannot deny that teaching foreign language is not such an easy thing due to the fact that many of the learners are not capable of speaking English very well although they have been learning it for more than ten years (Elementary: 6 years, Junior and Senior High School: 6 years). In line with this problem, this study aims at providing a solution by offering one teaching technique which seems to make the learners (especially young learners) enjoy learning through singing songs (Kasihani, 1999). Furthermore, Phillips (1995) said that young learners really enjoyed learning and singing songs with highly motivating. Based on those two researches and in efforts to make it easier in English language learning, especially to young learners, the writer translated the very common and popular Indonesian kid songs into English. These translated songs were then used to teach the students of Kindergarten up to Elementary ones of the first and second grade. This meant that before a teacher started to teach, s/he had to translate the Indonesian kid songs at first into English. Due to its popularity and familiarity, it was expected that this teaching technique would be more effective and efficient to apply especially to young learners.

## 1. Introduction

In foreign language learning, there should be a certain method and technique required by a teacher in efforts to achieve the teaching and learning target. Rivers, Wilga M (1971) said that there were several teaching methods, especially in foreign language teaching. They were Grammar-translation Method, Direct Method, Reading Method and Audio-lingual Method. Furthermore, to achieve the learning target during learning process, a teacher has to be capable of finding a way out or teaching technique and media how to attract and make his students enjoy learning as it is expected. If the teaching technique and media correspond with the material to teach and the learner's need, it will make the teacher easy to transfer the material to teach and with a pleasure the students will also be capable of accepting it without any burden. Therefore, there are quite a lot of media and teaching techniques which can be used depending on the teacher's creativity in delivering the material to teach and the teaching target to achieve. However, there are several media and teaching techniques which are very popular in English language teaching, such as flow chart, role-play, story-telling, student-centered learning, discussion, games and songs (Suyanto, Kasihani: 1999).



In line with one of the teaching methods stated by Rivers, Wilga (1971) that was Audio-lingual Method combined with teaching technique and media offered by Kasihani (1999), the writer chooses songs as a teaching media to teach English especially to young learners because singing songs is an activity which can entertain and is really enjoyed by them. Dobson, Julia M (1997) said that singing is a very popular activity which is really enjoyed by all communities in the world. As we know that singing activity is closely related to music and everybody knows that music is universal. Therefore, in general all of us, children or young learners too like singing very much. This fact will make both the teacher and the learners easy to achieve the expected target dealing with foreign language or second language learning. Furthermore, the similar thought was also stated by Phillips: 1995. He said that young learners really enjoyed learning and singing songs. Meanwhile the older learners found working with well-known pop songs highly motivating.

Dealing with the explanation above, it could be concluded that teaching English to young learners through singing songs is very appropriate with the children's world and need because most of their activities in schools (especially the kindergarten students) are singing and playing. However in efforts to make the learners easier to enjoy and practice singing and memorizing the songs, the writer chooses the simple ones and many of them have to be translated from Indonesian popular kid songs into English. Therefore, this article is suggested to be applied in English teaching to the ages between 5-9 year old students. In these ages the learners have been familiar with alphabets (how to do spelling) and words or phrases (how to do pronouncing the new vocabularies because they might have obtained their English language acquisition from the books, their teachers, games and any other resource. This competence will make the teacher easier to train them to do pronouncing the new vocabulary more easily and correctly.

## 2. THE AIM OF A STUDY

Based on the introduction above, this study is aimed at applying the English language teaching through Indonesian translated songs. As the learning target is directed to the young learners of 5 to 9 year old children and in efforts to make it easy to remember and memorize, the songs should be selected from those of having simple lyrics, familiar and popular ones. These songs are then translated into English before being taught to them. Through this teaching technique, it is expected that English language teaching and learning can run very well and smoothly because the learners will feel pleased and entertained during the learning process. Furthermore, feeling amused and entertained, it is also expected to be capable of encouraging and motivating them to learn English more of the other materials and skills.

## 3. STEPS OF TEACHING

To make the learners be capable of pronouncing every word or phrase very well and fluently and in efforts to be capable of singing smoothly in English, they must be familiar with the words or phrases (the song lyrics) used to sing. Therefore, before the teacher starts to teach singing, he has to do the following activities:

1.1. The teacher has to do pre-teaching or give eliciting questions by asking anything related to the object or singing activity to learn. For example, when the song material to teach is about 'Greeting' the teacher should ask questions in Indonesian: '*Ayo anak-anak ada yang tahu, apa ucapan salam yang digunakan pada jam seperti sekarang ini (misalnya jam 8 pagi)?, Apa bahasa Inggrisnya 'Selamat Pagi, selamat siang, selamat sore', ada yang tahu?*', etc. Then the student might answer: Good morning, good afternoon, good evening. Then the teacher continues to ask another question: '*Apa yang harus kita katakan untuk menanyakan kabar atau keadaan teman atau saudara kita?*' The student will answer: 'How are you; How are you doing, etc'. The next question is: '*Apa jawabannya kalau ada pertanyaan tadi?*' The student will answer: I'm fine, thank you. After that the teacher repeats those expressions several times until all of the students can pronounce them very well and fluently. Here is the lyrics of song to teach:

'Good morning.... Good morning, Good morning.. How are you

Good morning..... Good morning, I'm fine thank you'

- 1.2 Showing or appointing an object that will be taught and learnt both in Indonesian and English. For example, when a teacher wants to teach a song on 'Spelling', s/he should provide a media of alphabet and put it on the board. Then he may compare its spelling between Indonesian and English, like this: A [ei] – B [bi] – C [si] – D [di] – E [i] – F [ef] – G [ji] – H [ej],.....and so on.
- 1.3 Before singing a song in English, the teacher should ask the students to sing in Indonesian at first. This is meant to recall the song that will be learnt if the song is adopted from Indonesian or the other language.
- 1.4 If most of the students have been capable of singing the song very well in Indonesian, the teacher can continue teaching by asking his students to repeat the pronunciation of all of the words or phrases available in the lyrics of the English song.
- 1.5 Ask the students to repeat to pronounce every word or phrase twice or three times until all of the students are able to pronounce all of the lyrics very well and accurately.
- 1.6 Ask the students to repeat and read properly the longer lyrics of the whole song after the teacher
- 1.7 If necessary, ask the students to repeat the pronunciation of the whole lyrics of the song once or twice
- 1.8 After that all of the students can start singing a song in English together.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

In this part, the writer is presenting a number of songs to apply in teaching English to young learners through songs or Indonesian translated songs. In efforts to make the learners easy to recall and memorize, the songs to sing are mostly related to the daily practice of the learners or students. Actually the singing practice can be taught and guided not only by a teacher but also the learner's parents or any other else. Therefore this learning activity can be conducted either formally (in schools), at home or any other place. However, a teacher or a mother who wants to teach English to her students or children through Indonesian and or any other language song can also find and adopt her own child's favorite song and translate it by herself into English. Due to the different structure between source language and target language (Indonesian and English) of course there should have some kind of adjustment between them, such as the intonation, lyrics and translation type in efforts to get the same rhythm. Furthermore, to attract and to encourage the children to learn English, if it is possible or it is suggested that the teacher bring some visual aids or media in accordance with the content of song to sing. For example, when the song to sing is '*Balonku*' (My Balloon), the teacher should bring several balloons of different colors which have to be adjusted with those stated in the song lyrics. To make the students happier, at the end of class, it will be better if all of the balloons are given to all of the students as a present. Below are several examples of English teaching model through songs to apply in accordance with the student's need, level, age and its context.

##### (1) Greeting

When somebody meets somebody else and both of them have known each other, they usually will greet each other. However, greeting can also be stated when somebody wants to speak formally to somebody else that has not been known before, the audience, class and the other people of different contexts. Furthermore, greeting must be adjusted with the context, situation, where, when and to whom the greeting is directed to. In English, there are several kinds of greeting in accordance with its time. Good Morning is expressed from 12.05 am to 11.55 am; Good afternoon: after 12 midday until sunset prayer (around 5.40 pm); Good Evening is stated after sunset prayer p to 9 pm and Good Night is expressed when one of us wants to say 'Good bye' in the evening or wants to go to bed. In line with the explanation above, there is also a song related to Greetings entitled 'Good Morning'. This song is good to sing especially to open the class or before the formal class starts because in general the students are still fresh, happy and cheerful. Here is the lyric of the song:

##### **Title of Song: 'Good Morning'**

@Good morning - good morning, Good morning - how are you

Good morning - good morning, I'm fine, thank you.

**(2) Spelling**

Spelling is also important to learn, especially dealing with reading skill. This is the first step of English language learning to introduce to the beginners before they learn to pronounce, speak and read. In this step, the learners are trained how to spell the words or a group of words in English. To make it easy and fun to learn how to spell correctly, the learners are requested to memorize it by singing a song as follows:

**Title of Song: A – B - C**

@A – B – C – D – E – F – G – H – I – J – K – L – M – N

O – P – Q – R – S – T – U – V – W – X – Y and Z (Sung Twice)

**(3) Numbers**

Having been taught how to spell the alphabets in English, the learners are introduced with ‘Numbers’ as their basic mastery of calculation. In this step, the learners are only introduced with English numbers from 1 (one) to 12 (twelve). This is meant to fit or match between the lyrics and rhythm available in Indonesian and English. They have some differences about it so that the translated song has more numbers than the original one. There are also several other words which are totally different between the source text and the target one.

Source Text: Indonesian	Target Text: English
<i>Satu – satu, aku sayang ibu</i>	One-Two and Three, I love my mother
<i>Dua – dua, juga sayang ayah</i>	Four-Five and Six, I love my father
<i>Tiga – tiga, saying adik kakak</i>	Seven-Eight-Nine, I love brother, sister
<i>Satu – dua – tiga, saying semuanya</i>	Ten-Eleven-Twelve, I love all together

**(4) Parts of Our Body**

In this step, the learners are taught to recognize parts of their own body by singing a song. There is a Javanese song which can be matched to make a rhythm in English. The writer thinks that this Javanese song is quite appropriate used to learn and memorize parts of our body through singing a song. Below is the source text of Javanese song:

Source Text: Javanese	Target Text: English
<i>Yo prokonco podho ndhaplang</i>	@This is a hair, this is a head
<i>Njur mengarep, njur mendhuwur</i>	This is a cheek, this is a chin
<i>Sikil jinjit, tangan nekuk</i>	This is a nose, this is a face
<i>Yen wis bisa, njur mbegagah</i>	This is a lip, this is a tongue (Repeated 3x)

**(5) Introducing an Object Around us**

The next step is introducing the learners any object around them. Therefore, there are quite a lot of new objects or things to mention depending where the learners are. When they are in the dining room, for example, you can introduce them several objects, like ‘table – chair - spoon – fork – plate – knife – glass – rice – soup – fruit - fried chicken, etc. As well as when they are in the class room, you can introduce them objects such as, floor - door – window – white board – wall – board marker – table/desk – picture – pencil – pen – ruler – eraser – book – bag and many others. This learning model can be applied by singing at the same time appointing the objects. Here is an example of song to sing to introduce any object around you:

@This is a window - this is a door, This is a wall and this is a floor

That is a ceiling - that is a fan, That is a gate and that is a fence

@This is a spoon - this is a fork, This is a bowl and this is a glass

That is a saucer - that is a plate, That is a knife and that is a cup

**(6) Lullabies(Nina bobo‘)**

This activity is usually conducted by moms or mothers when they accompany their babies on the bed. In general, Indonesian mothers who have babies of their ages below 4, they usually accompany their babies on the bed to make them sleep. While lying on the bed, they usually make a story telling or do singing for them. The most popular song to sing is ‘Nina bobo’. However, in efforts to make the closeness between a mother and her baby, the writer suggests that the baby’s name be changed, in

accordance with the baby's name instead of Nina. For example, a mother has a baby named 'Sofi', then the title of song should be 'Sofibobo' (Sofi's sleeping) not 'Nina bobo' (Nina's sleeping). Below is the lyrics of 'Nina bobo' (Indonesian) and its translation in English.

Source Text: Indonesian	Target Text: English
<i>Nina bobo' oh... Nina bobo'</i>	Sofi's sleeping, oh my dear Sofi
<i>Kalau tidak bobo digigit nyamuk</i>	If you are not sleeping please don't do crying
<i>Nina bobo' oh... Nina bobo'</i>	Sofi's sleeping, oh my dear Sofi
<i>Kalau tidak bobo' digigit nyamuk</i>	If you are not sleeping, please don't do crying

### (7) Several Other Examples of Indonesian Translated Songs

Here are several other kid songs which have been translated from Indonesian into English.

#### 'Cicak-Cicak di Dinding'

Source Text: Indonesian	Target Text: English
<i>Cicak-cicak di dinding</i>	There's a lizard on the wall
<i>Diam-diam meraya</i>	It is silently crawling
<i>Datang seekor nyamuk...</i>	There's a mosquito coming
<i>Hap....., lalu ditangkap</i>	Up..., it is captured then

## 5. Conclusion

There are many kinds of different teaching and learning methods and techniques to apply. One of them is singing a song. The songs to teach and learn are those of Indonesian popular kid songs which are translated into English. This teaching and learning technique seems to be quite effective and efficient, especially for young learners or beginners of the ages from 5 to 9, or even younger. Besides entertaining, unconsciously the learners do not feel that they are learning a new language because it is fun and joyful. This might encourage and motivate them to learn the other language skills like speaking, reading and writing.

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