



## Teacher Readiness in Implementing Children's Literature to Enhance English Language Learning in Young Learners Classroom

Raudyatuzzahra

Postgraduated program of English Education, Mataram University, Indonesia

<http://dx.doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v10i12.5183>

---

### **Abstract**

This study employs a qualitative approach as a research design. This qualitative study aims to investigate teacher readiness for incorporating children's literature into English language learning with young learners. The research employs in-depth interviews as the primary data collection method. This study involves two young learner English teacher as the participants who were selected purposively, one from an international kindergarten and one from a state primary school. The findings of this study reveal that teachers are generally aware of the benefits of using children's literature in the classroom and acknowledge the importance of preparation. Teachers emphasize the need to be well-prepared before entering young learners' classrooms, ensuring that everything is ready for effective implementation. They emphasize that children's literature not only benefits young learners but also aids teachers in delivering content more effectively. Teachers report that children's literature creates a fun and active learning environment that fosters enthusiasm among students.

**Keywords:** *Teacher Readiness; Children's Literature; Teaching English to Young Learners*

### **Introduction**

Nowdays, proficiency in English is widely recognized as the primary ability that can lead to success. According to Chang (2012) in Mutiah et al. (2020), introducing English at a young age has become the trend and a source of competition among non-native countries all over the world. Thus, many parents, particularly those from countries where English is not the primary language, begin to teach or introduce the English language to their children from an early age. From the perspective of teaching English to young learners, teaching English through literature is in great demand because children's literature can help teachers improve the ability of young learners to master English.

According to Lightbown & Spada (2013), young children typically spend time playing because of their strong desire to explore new things. They frequently ask questions, give orders, describe real events, and retell stories based on their imagination. It indicates that if young learners are given new information or stories, they will ask questions to their teacher or parent related to their imagination. More importantly, Children's fluency and creativity continue to internalize increasingly complex structures as they enter school, expanding their vocabulary and enhancing their conversational skills (Brown, 2000). Therefore,

teachers can attract the attention of young learners by implementing children's literature in the classroom. Ghosn (2013) mentioned that children's literature is relevant and motivating because it addresses topics and themes of interest and consider pupil's developmental needs. Not only does it attract the attention of young learners, but children's literature also has many other benefits, such as; it can help young learners to improve language acquisition, boost literacy, and establish pupils' interest in reading. Ghosn (2013) also stated that children's literature could enable children to make meaningful connections and explore the values and standards of the target language culture. When young learners hear or see stories from the literature given by the teacher, they will indirectly understand human social values in the literature. For instance, children can understand human characteristics using narrative stories, which also present models for pupils' interaction.

Additionally, Ur (1996) believed that literature is an enjoyable resource for learning a language because it provides examples of various writing styles and representations of various authentic language uses and encourages the development of reading skills. Children's literature can also be used as a starting point for discussion and writing because it stimulates emotions and intellect, expands knowledge of the world, and makes young learners aware of human situations. Thus, children's literature can also help young learners solve problems, deal with difficult problems and concerns, and stimulate oral language development.

Moreover, despite the many advantages of children's literature, teachers need help teaching literature to young learners. As we all know, teaching another language besides our first language is challenging, especially teaching English to young learners. Songbatumis (2017), emphasized certain common issues in English language teaching, such as a loaded classroom, a lack of English interaction in the classroom, limited resource accessibility, various teaching methods and approaches, and the enhancement of teaching facilities. In line with that, from the issues mentioned, it can also affect the use of children's literature when teaching young learners in the classroom. Teaching literature to young learners is something that takes effort to take. According to Bland (2013), several issues on children's literature faced by teachers include; finding age-appropriate books that correspond with the curriculum and linguistics goals, the need for access to text through school libraries, and teacher education. The teacher also needs to consider preparing and using an effective methods in teaching literature, it is possible to have delightful and fulfilling experiences with the proper tools and strategies in teaching. Therefore, the success of teachers in implementing children's literature in the young learners' class depends on the readiness and skills of the teacher. As a result, before teaching young learners through children's literature, teachers must prepare themselves and the learning materials before the class starts. Various factors influence teacher preparation, including teachers' knowledge of children's literature, teaching practices, and attitudes toward utilizing literature as a teaching tool for young learners (Shuqair & Dashti, 2019). Understanding and resolving the issues that teachers have when implementing children's literature can significantly improve the efficacy of language teaching in early childhood education.

Based on the explanation already mentioned, this study aims to determine the implementation of children's literature in kindergarten and primary schools in Indonesia. Although many studies have discussed children's literature, most previous research did not discuss teacher preparation for teaching literature to young learners. Therefore, this study was conducted to determine teachers' readiness and preparation for teaching children's literature to young learners, whether teachers are aware of the literature, and whether the teachers are well prepared to teach English to young learners using children's literature.

## **Method**

The researcher adopts a qualitative approach as a research method in this study. Creswell (2009) defines qualitative research as a comprehensive investigation that includes discovery. Furthermore,

Creswell (2009) defined qualitative research as highly efficient research that occurs in real-life settings and it can help the researcher fully comprehend the participants or the data. Researchers that employ qualitative approaches can visit and interact with individuals in person. The case will be discussed in-depth and objectively using a qualitative approach. This approach was chosen by the researcher because the researcher in this study described and analyzed the item based on the data acquired. Thus, this study aimed to whether the young learners' teachers had a strong preparation for implementing children's literature in teaching and learning activities with young learners.

The participants in this study were one international kindergarten teacher and one state primary teacher. Furthermore, the data in this study are gathered through interviews, with in-depth interviews serving as the major data source. Open-ended observation, documentation, and interviews serve as the practical basis for data collection in qualitative research (Rossman & Rallis, 1998 as cited in Creswell, 2009). Therefore, the procedures employed in this study were in-depth interviews to obtain the data necessary to answer the research question.

### ***Findings and Discussion***

The study's conclusions and analysis are based on interviews with teachers of young learners from an international kindergarten and a public primary school. The participants in this study are identified using initial T1 (the foreign kindergarten teacher) and T2 (the state primary school teacher).

### ***Findings***

During the interview, the researcher asked several questions about the implementation and teacher readiness for using children's literature in teaching English to young learners. The participants explained their thought based on their experiences while implementing children's literature. The interview result indicate that teachers are aware and well-informed about implementing children's literature in young learners' classroom. All the participants agree that teachers must be ready before entering the young learner's class and prepare everything well before the class starts. Moreover, teachers argue that children's literature brings many benefits to teaching young learners, especially when learning foreign language. Besides being useful for young learners, implementing children's literature is also very useful for teachers due to children's literature can help teachers a lot in delivering material in young learners' class. The participants felt that if they used children's literature in the young learner's class, the atmosphere would be fun and active because the young learners were enthusiastic about participating. The participants also mentioned some children's literature that they usually used, such as; picturebooks, songs or rhymes, and children's magazines.

Nonetheless, the interview result also indicated that the teachers still have some issues with using children's literature in teaching young learners. the issues that the participants faced while teaching literature to young learners are handling the pupils who need to be more focused in the class, selecting appropriate literature for the young learner, and gaining motivation from the pupils. In addition, to face the issues of implementing children's literature for young learners, teacher professional development is needed because teacher development can help teachers to be more creative and more ready to teach young learners using children's literature.

### **Benefits of Literature in ELL**

Children's literature can be outstanding tool for improving young learners' English language development. Ur (1996) believed that literature is an enjoyable resources for learning a language due to it

provides examples of various writing styles and representations of various authentic language uses and encourages the development of reading skills. It exposes students to new language and sentence structures and encourages critical thinking, cultural awareness, and empathy. As T1 and T2 remarked in the interview session, employing children's literature encourages student engagement and enthusiasm in the teaching and learning process and also aids teachers in providing understandable material.

Teacher 1

*"using children's literature is effective because it is interesting. By storybook, it will make students enthusiastic by imagining how the story will look like by their imagination."*

*"because we teach kindergarten students who are going to primary, we usually use a reading book but the simple ones as they learn how to read."*

Teacher 2

*"the benefits of using children's literature is helping the teacher to give clear explanation related to the material, and make the students more engaged with the activity in the classroom, so that there will be a collaboration between the teacher and students."*

Including children's book in language learning has been shown in studies to improve reading comprehension, writing skills, and comprehensive language ability. Reading children's magazines and storybooks with the complicated sentences and structures can help pupils improve their grammar, but books that present various cultures and ideas can extend their worldwide view and inspire empathy.

### **Difficulties in Implementing Children's Literature**

Since there are numerous advantages to employ children's literature in English language acquisition, teachers may encounter several difficulties while using children's literature. Finding appropriate books for children corresponding to the curriculum and linguistic goals is a regular difficulty that teachers faced. Another issue is ensuring that pupils are actively engaged in the learning process. Teachers may ask open-ended questions to keep students involved and increase comprehension, offer context for unfamiliar language, and stimulate conversation.

Teacher 1

*"sometimes pupils are distracted by the things and friends around them."*

Teacher 2

*"Because young learners tend to be more active and talkative, the condition during the learning process can be such a noisy, then if there were students who make a noise during the learning process, I would say "attention please!" and automatically they will answer "Ssttt" so that the condition will be more conducive. If it cannot be done by that, I will separate the seats between the talkative one sitting in front of the teacher's table."*

*"Our school library only has a few story books, especially the ones in English. The books in our library are mostly textbooks. Even though the school is equipped with wifi, it is still difficult for me to find suitable books for children because there are many sources on the internet, so it is rather difficult to filter the appropriate books."*

Difficulties mentioned by participants are related to Bland (2013), several issues on children's literature faced by teachers include; finding age-appropriate books that correspond with the curriculum and linguistic goals, the lack of access to text through school libraries, and teacher education. Teachers may ask open-ended questions to keep students involved and increase comprehension, offer context for unfamiliar language, and stimulate conversation.

## Future Direction and Strategies for Teacher's Readiness in Implementing Children's Literature

Educators can use several ways to improve teacher preparedness or readiness in implementing children's literature. Shuqair & Dashti (2019) mentioned that various factors influence teacher preparation, including teachers' knowledge of children's literature, teaching practices, and attitudes toward utilizing literature as a teaching tool.

### Teacher 1

*"I will read a storybook to the children so that they can pay more attention to me, and I also ask the pupils to join me in the library, and they can pick the books they want to read."*

*"To get students' attention, teachers need to invite students to be more active, for example, interacting with students by giving questions or commands that they like."*

### Teacher 2

*"To enhance my ability in terms of professional development, I followed an online workshop or webinar and read any resources related to the children's literature."*

Based on the conditions in implementing children's literature for young learners, teachers tend to explain that when using children's literature, teachers must create a communicative atmosphere with their pupils by asking them questions related to the topic. Another option is to foster a pleasant classroom climate that promotes pupils' engagement and participation. Teachers can develop comprehension and critical thinking abilities through group discussion, read-aloud, and interactive activities. Moreover, an excellent technique is to give chances for professional development focusing on using children's literatures in English language teaching and learning. Workshops, conferences, and online courses are the examples of teacher development in teaching literature for young learners.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, while teachers recognize the benefits of implementing children's literature in the classroom, they also confront problems such as selecting appropriate books and keeping pupils involved. To overcome these issues, it is essential to prioritize teacher professional development and to foster an enjoyable educational atmosphere that encourages active involvement and critical thinking. By applying these strategies, teachers are able to improve their readiness and effectively use children's literature as a valuable instrument in language development for young learners.

## References

- Bland, J. (2018). Learning through literature. In S. Garton, & F. Coland, *The Routledge Handbook of Teaching English to Young Learners* (pp. 265-284). London: Routledge.
- Brown, H. D. (2000). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* (4th ed.). White Plains, New York: Pearson Education.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Ghosn, I. (2013). Humanizing Teaching English to Young Learners with Children's Literature. *Children's Literature in English Language Education (CLELE)*, 1(1), 39-57.

- Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2013). *How Languages are Learned*. United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.
- Mutiah, S. D., Nakhriyah, M., HR, N. H., Hidayat, D. N., & Hamid, F. (2020). The Readiness of Teaching English to Young Learners in Indonesia. *Jurnal Basicedu*, 4(4), 1380-1387. doi:<https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v4i4.541>.
- Shuqair, K., & Dashti, A. (2019). Teachers' Perceptions of the Use and Effectiveness of Children's Literature in EFL Classroom of the Primary Schools of Kuwait. *English Language Teaching*, 12(7). doi:10.5539/elt.v12n7p87.
- Songbatumis, A. M. (2017). Challenges in Teaching English Faced by English Teachers at MTsN Taliwang. *Journal of Foreign Language Teaching and Learning*, 2(2), 54-67.
- Ur, P. (1996). *A course in language teaching: Practice and Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

## Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).