

ENGLISH LITERACY MOVEMENT THROUGH FUN SHARED READING AT AISYIYAH KASIH IBU ORPHANAGE IN BENGKULU CITY

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Abstract

The students' ability to read, comprehend, and effectively use information in English is still a cause for concern. There are several factors exacerbating this situation. Apart from the very weak basic English proficiency, especially in reading skills which is the main issue, there is a lack of reading facilities in the community, and the interest and habit of reading have not taken root among the people. Observing this situation, there is a need for an initiative or movement to motivate and improve their English literacy skills. Thus, a community service activity was carried out. This activity took place at the Aisyiyah Kasih Ibu Orphanage in Bengkulu City and was attended by the children residing there. This activity aimed to launch a movement to enhance the literacy level of the students at the Aisyiyah Kasih Ibu Orphanage by implementing Fun Shared Reading. This activity spanned from 01 to 23 September 2023. The activities began with providing literacy materials in English, focusing on reading. After the reading session, discussions, related explanations, exercises, and creative activities related to the story were conducted. Through this community service, the foster children at the Aisyiyah Kasih Ibu Orphanage gained a new understanding and enthusiasm to improve their interest and habit in English literacy through the examples that were provided.

Keywords: literacy movement, orphanage, fun shared reading

Abstrak

Kemampuan siswa dalam membaca, memahami, dan menggunakan informasi dalam bahasa Inggris masih menjadi hal yang memprihatinkan. Ada beberapa faktor yang memperparah situasi ini. Selain kemampuan dasar berbahasa Inggris yang sangat lemah, terutama dalam keterampilan membaca yang merupakan isu utama, terdapat kurangnya fasilitas bacaan di masyarakat, dan minat serta kebiasaan membaca belum mengakar di kalangan masyarakat. Melihat situasi ini, diperlukan inisiatif atau gerakan untuk memotivasi dan meningkatkan keterampilan literasi bahasa Inggris mereka. Oleh karena itu, dilakukan kegiatan pengabdian masyarakat. Kegiatan ini berlangsung di Panti Asuhan Aisyiyah Kasih Ibu di Kota Bengkulu dan diikuti oleh anak-anak yang tinggal di sana. Kegiatan ini bertujuan untuk memulai gerakan untuk meningkatkan tingkat literasi siswa di Panti Asuhan Aisyiyah Kasih Ibu melalui penerapan Fun Shared Reading. Kegiatan ini berlangsung dari 01 - 23 September 2023. Kegiatan dimulai dengan menyediakan bahan literasi dalam bahasa Inggris, dengan fokus pada membaca. Setelah sesi membaca, dilakukan diskusi, penjelasan terkait, latihan, dan kegiatan kreatif yang terkait dengan cerita. Melalui pengabdian masyarakat ini, anak-anak asuh di Panti Asuhan Aisyiyah Kasih Ibu memperoleh pemahaman dan antusiasme baru untuk meningkatkan minat dan kebiasaan mereka dalam literasi bahasa Inggris melalui contoh-contoh yang diberikan.

Kata Kunci: gerakan literasi; panti asuhan; membaca bersama yang menyenangkan

Introduction

The skills of reading, understanding, and applying information in English are very important and crucial in the education of children. Unfortunately, there are still concerns about the low proficiency in these skills among students. Several factors exacerbate this situation, including fundamental weaknesses in English mastery, especially in reading skills, which are the main focus. (Kustanti, n.d.) in Tarigan (Tarigan, 1979:7) states that

students face a number of challenges in understanding reading texts, making it difficult to grasp the original meaning of the text. The lack of reading materials in the vicinity and the low interest

and habit of reading also pose significant obstacles in developing English literacy skills, as stated by (Fasica, 2021) that interest in literacy activities in the community has not yet become an ingrained culture.

Panti Asuhan Kasih Ibu is one of the orphanages established and managed by the Regional Leadership of 'Aisyiyah (PWA) Bengkulu. Located in the city center, precisely on Bali Street in Bengkulu City, it is adjacent to Campus I of the Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu. The results of the preliminary study we conducted at the Aisyiyah Kasih Ibu Orphanage show that there are currently 22 female children residing in the orphanage. Within the orphanage, there are no reading materials available to develop English literacy skills, leading to low reading proficiency among the orphaned children, especially in English. Additionally, the interest in reading among the orphaned children is also low, resulting in a decline in their reading comprehension.

In this context, an initiative or movement is needed to motivate and enhance their English literacy skills. It is important to create an environment that stimulates interest in reading and enriches the literacy skills of students, especially among the children of the Aisyiyah Kasih Ibu Orphanage in Bengkulu City. According to (Lebar et al., 2021), the English literacy movement is crucial to ensure that Indonesian children, including those residing in orphanages like the Izzati Jannah Foundation, have competitive skills in various fields. Furthermore, (Arum Nisma Wulanjani & Candradewi Wahyu Anggraeni, 2019) concludes that by optimizing the Reading Literacy Movement, students and teachers will gain many benefits to support the activities of learning and teaching.

Recognizing this urgency, we conducted a community service activity as a concrete step to address this challenge. This activity took place at the Aisyiyah Kasih Ibu Orphanage in Bengkulu City and involved the children residing there. The main objective of this activity is to initiate a movement to enhance the literacy levels of the foster children at the Aisyiyah Kasih Ibu Orphanage by implementing the *Fun Shared Reading* method. *Fun Shared Reading* is a reading learning method aimed at helping students understand the content of the reading as a whole through cooperation or sharing of information (Melinda, 2017). This activity took place from 01 to 23 September 2023.

The activity began by providing English literacy materials, with a focus on reading. After the reading session, it continued with discussions, related explanations, exercises, and creative activities related to the stories that were read. Through this community service activity, we aim to provide new understanding and enthusiasm to the foster children at the Aisyiyah Kasih Ibu Orphanage to enhance their interest and habits in English literacy through the real-life examples we provided. We believe that this literacy initiative will open opportunities to improve English reading skills among the children of the

Aisyiyah Kasih Ibu Orphanage, and inspire them to develop an even greater interest and love for the world of literacy with a heightened spirit.

Method Research

This community service activity was conducted from 01 to 23 September 2023, at the Aisyiyah Kasih Ibu Orphanage in Bengkulu City. The target participants were the 22 children residing in the Aisyiyah Kasih Ibu Orphanage. As mentioned in the introduction, the Fun Shared Reading method was utilized as an alternative method to address the existing challenges in the Aisyiyah Kasih Ibu Orphanage. The activities took place from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM, with a schedule adapted to the availability of the orphanage children. The community service lecturer involved three university students to assist in this activity. The implementation of the orphanage literacy movement employed the *Fun Shared Reading* method, aimed to enhance the English literacy of the orphanage children, particularly in the reading skill, by following these stages: 1. Coordination and preparation; 2. Visit to the Self- Access Center at the Language Center of the University of Muhammadiyah Bengkulu; 3. Shared reading session and discussion; and 4. Feedback, positive reinforcement, and provision of reading materials.

Results and Discussion

The English literacy movement to enhance the reading skills of the children at the Aisyiyah Kasih Ibu Orphanage in Bengkulu City through the Fun Shared Reading method has been successfully implemented by the community service team consisting of lecturers from the English Education program at UMB, along with assistance from three students. The results of the service activity are described below based on its stages:

1. Coordination and Preparation

The coordination stage is the initial phase of the Community Service Program (PKM) involving the service partners, namely the management of the orphanage. This stage entails conveying the purpose and objectives of the activity. Here, the service team, comprised of three lecturers along with the Head of the English Education Program at the University of Muhammadiyah Bengkulu, met with the head of the orphanage, Mr. Dandi Sunardi, M.Kom. The meeting was attended by the English Education program's head, lecturers, students, the orphanage's management, and the children from the orphanage. The importance of English proficiency for the children was conveyed, and inquiries were made about the activities they engage in to practice their English skills, as well as the availability of English reading materials. During the meeting, the schedule and location of the activities were also discussed. The orphanage's management and the children agreed to the proposed schedule and location. The orphanage's management requested that the children actively participate, emphasizing the significance of this community service activity in enhancing their English knowledge and skills. After the coordination stage concluded, both the community service team and the partners made their respective preparations. The team prepared materials such as banners and a lesson plan (schedule, learning materials,

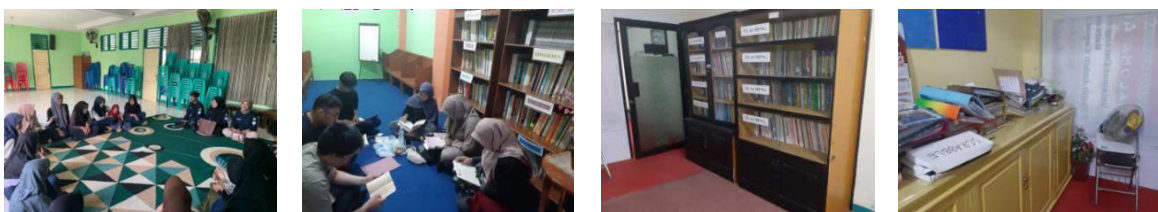
instructors, and assisting students). Meanwhile, the service partners arranged the venue and ensured the presence of the orphanage's children for the activity. The synergy between both parties, the community service team and the partners, was evident in this stage of the activity, demonstrating the shared goal of successfully conducting the community service.



Picture 1. Coordination and Preparation Session

2. Explanation about the Reading Corner at the Self-Access Center (SAC) of the Language Center at the Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu

Since the Aisyiyah Kasih Ibu Orphanage does not have a collection of reading materials for the foster children to read, the community service team explained about the reading corner available at the SAC of the Language Center at UMB. The explanation about the SAC Reading Corner aims to inform and introduce various types of English language learning materials, including textbooks, storybooks, magazines, newspapers, short stories, novels, non-fiction readings, sets of questions, dictionaries, pocketbooks, reference books, and journals. The presence of the reading corner at the SAC is actually very close to the Aisyiyah Kasih Ibu Orphanage, only a 4-minute walk away, and can be utilized by the foster children free of charge since it still belongs to Muhammadiyah, but they were not aware of it. The children from the Kasih Ibu orphanage are encouraged to visit this cost-free reading corner to motivate and cultivate their interest in English literacy. It was explained that there, they can independently search for reading materials that they like the most according to their age category, allowing them to read on their own to stimulate early awareness and understanding.



Picture 2. Explanation about Reading Corner at SAC Session

3. Shared Reading and Discussion Session

After ensuring that the books the children have chosen are interesting and suitable for their age and interests to be read together, the community service team brings them to a comfortable and quiet place for shared reading. They are seated in one corner of the SAC Language Center and in another well-lit area. They are seated informally to allow for more freedom of movement and relaxation. The *Fun Shared Reading* method is implemented at this stage. Here, the community service team asks one of the children to step forward to share their reading, starting with the title and showing the book to

the other children. The team provides background information about the story or topic from the book. The community service team then engages all the children by asking them to listen because the team will demonstrate reading with correct and expressive pronunciation. They are asked to follow along until it is finished. Then, children are appointed to read with correct and expressive pronunciation after it has been demonstrated. After one reading is completed, it is followed by another reading from another child. Here, the next children continue to share their readings with the others, so that all the children are familiar with the various readings, not just the one book they selected from the SAC.

The *fun shared reading* activity then continues. After all the children have shared and exchanged readings and have mastered the pronunciation of their readings, the team then conducts interactive and enjoyable activities related to the children's comprehension of the readings. For example, discussions about challenging vocabulary, inviting the children to ask each other questions, predicting what will happen next, expressing opinions about the story, or discussing the content of the book and conveying the messages that can be gleaned from the reading. This will enhance their understanding of the material they have read.



Picture 3. Shared Reading and Discussion Session

4. Feedback, Positive Encouragement, and Providing Reading Books

The implementation of *Fun Shared Reading* ends at this stage. Here, the team provides positive feedback such as praise and encouragement to the children who actively participate in the shared reading session. The community service team also always encourages them to continue developing their reading skills. The community service team agrees to be a good example in reading and demonstrate an interest in English literacy. Then, the community service team also provides assistance with books to the orphanage children. The books given are interesting storybooks that support the English reading skills of the orphanage children.



Picture 4. Feedback, Postive Encouragement, and Providing Reading Books Session

Based on the results of the community service conducted by the team at the Aisiyiah Kasih Ibu orphanage, several related aspects will be discussed, namely: the importance of English language proficiency for children in orphanages, the Self-Access Center (SAC)

as a provider of English reading materials, and the English language literacy movement activities through fun shared reading for children in orphanages.

Firstly, the community service team argues that mastering the English language is important

for orphanage children, especially at the Aisyiyah Kasih Ibu orphanage, so that they can compete in this era of globalization. Some orphanages have implemented English language

proficiency activities or programs for their wards, and they say that English is important for them to face current global competition. This statement is supported by (Suriadi & Damanik, 2022) that the wards at Taruna Melati Pematangsiatar Orphanage feel that English is an important and interesting language to learn.

Secondly, the Reading Corner at the Self-Access Center (SAC) UMB is a specially designed

area to facilitate reading activities for visitors. Located in a comfortable and well-lit space, this corner is equipped with neatly arranged bookshelves, housing a diverse collection of reading materials in English. Around this area, there are low tables that invite visitors to sit comfortably and enjoy books or other reading materials with ease. Adequate lighting and organized arrangements create a pleasant atmosphere in this reading corner and allow visitors to fully focus on their reading. This makes the reading corner at the SAC a valuable resource for anyone looking to improve their English language skills, especially reading, including the wards of the orphanage. (Habiburrahman & Fatmawati, 2020) stated that reading corners become important literacy facilities for children that can enhance their reading interest and literacy.

Finally, the English reading literacy activity through the *Fun Shared Reading* method at the Aisyiyah Kasih Ibu Orphanage in Bengkulu City became a special moment for the wards of the orphanage. They gathered in a comfortable and enthusiastic room, equipped with various interesting reading/story books. The children were given the freedom to choose the books that most interested them, and then sat with the community service team to read together. In addition to being a way to develop reading skills, this activity also created moments of togetherness and joy among them. The service providers presented stories with expressive voices, making the stories come to life and engaging. Furthermore, the children were also given the opportunity to share their opinions and understanding of the story being read, which helps nurture critical thinking and self-expression skills. The Fun Shared Reading activity not only enriched the children's understanding of literacy but also formed emotional bonds and boosted their confidence in reading and sharing stories. This statement is in line with (Saeful Anwar, 2020) statement that the implementation of the enjoyable shared reading method on folklore material has a positive influence on the reading comprehension abilities of children. Furthermore, the initiative of providing free reading books at the Aisyiyah Kasih Ibu Orphanage in Bengkulu City has a very important impact on improving the English reading habits of the wards. These books not only increase their knowledge but also foster interest and love for reading. Next, the literacy movement is also related to instilling students' character

values. Related to this, according to (Hendrawan, 2017), the literacy movement in Elementary School, conceptually, indicates the integration in efforts to cultivate character values so that students become lifelong learners. At last, providing books for free also helps address any economic challenges that the children may face, ensuring that literacy can be accessed fairly by all children. Through this approach, the program not only forms positive habits in English reading but also opens the door to a world of boundless knowledge and imagination for the wards in this orphanage. This statement aligns with (Hari et al., 2021) statement that children in orphanages show interest and enthusiasm in reading the books provided as donations. Conclusion

The literacy movement in orphanages through the Fun Shared Reading method at the Aisyiyah Kasih Ibu Orphanage in Bengkulu City is a significant effort in improving the English reading skills of the foster children. Through this activity, they are given the opportunity to access various interesting and high-quality reading materials. This not only expands their knowledge but also nurtures their interest and love for reading activities. Furthermore, this program creates valuable moments for interaction and camaraderie among the children, the community service team, students, and caretakers of the orphanage. Thus, this literacy movement not only enhances English reading skills but also establishes a strong foundation for the intellectual and emotional growth of the children in this orphanage.

Here are some recommendations that can be suggested. First, there is a need to enhance collaboration with the local community and educational institutions around the orphanage. By involving external parties, this program can expand access to resources and recruit more volunteers to support it. Additionally, conducting regular training for volunteers and caregivers will improve their skills in teaching English reading. Furthermore, it is important to conduct periodic evaluations of the progress and effectiveness of this program, in order to identify areas that need improvement and measure the positive impact of the program. Finally, involving the children in the planning and evaluation process of the program will give them a greater sense of ownership and motivate them to participate actively.

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