



Integration of children's songs in Indonesian language learning at Muslim Santitham Foundation School, Thailand: An experience in teaching BIPA

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Abstract

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Learning Indonesian for foreign speakers (BIPA) at the elementary school level requires a fun, communicative, and suitable approach for the child's age and development. An effective medium in supporting this learning is children's songs. Songs can help children develop their ability to listen, pronounce, and understand language naturally. This study aims to describe the effectiveness, benefits, and challenges of integrating children's songs into BIPA learning at the Muslim Santitham Foundation School in Thailand. This research employed qualitative descriptive methods. Data collection techniques were conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation of student learning outcomes. The research subjects were 32 elementary school students (A1). The data analysis technique used the Miles and Huberman model, consisting of three main steps, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions/verification. The results of the study show that the use of children's songs can increase students' active participation, strengthen basic vocabulary mastery, and create a pleasant learning atmosphere. However, several challenges, such as limited audio-visual media and differences in students' language ability levels, need special attention. Children's songs have proven to be a potential medium in BIPA learning for children, especially in rebuilding the closeness of the Malay language and culture in the southern region of Thailand.

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INTRODUCTION

Learning Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) for elementary school children requires an appropriate approach to the characteristics of early age development (Rohmah et al, 2023). This approach requires fun, interactive, and meaningful learning (Nurhasanah, 2021). Children at this age tend to absorb information more easily through activities involving musical, visual, and movement elements (Nuryatin & Sarlina, 2005). Good and enjoyable experiences will have a positive impact on children's development, and vice versa; children learn from everything they see, hear, and feel (Yunita & Watini, 2022). In this context, children's songs are a potential learning medium to be integrated into the BIPA learning process for children.

Children's songs provide simple and repetitive vocabulary and sentence structures (Wahyuningsih, 2017). The use of songs in language learning can help children naturally practice their ability to listen, pronounce, and understand language (Ridwan & Awaluddin, 2019). Through singing, students can learn new vocabulary, practice pronunciation, and gain an understanding of sentence context. Educational songs adapted to the subject matter can be an effective tool to introduce new concepts and strengthen students' understanding (Sudirman et al, 2024).

The integration of children's songs in BIPA learning at the age of children or the elementary school level aims to bridge the language acquisition process through a communicative and contextual approach. Therefore, it is important to examine how children's

songs can be used effectively in BIPA learning for elementary school children, as well as to identify the benefits and challenges that may arise in their implementation.

One of the interesting countries to discuss in this teaching issue is Thailand, especially the southern part. One of the roots of the Indonesian language, Malay, has long been used by the people of southern Thailand by the older generation. Unfortunately, their younger generations show a lack of enthusiasm for the Malay language. Therefore, teaching BIPA to children in southern Thailand is important because it can be a place to establish language closeness.

Through BIPA teaching, the young generation in southern Thailand not only learns Indonesian as a foreign language, but also regains their closeness to the language and culture of their ancestors that are starting to be forgotten. In addition, BIPA can be a bridge to strengthen cultural and educational relations between Indonesia and Thailand, especially in the southern region, which has historical and cultural closeness.

Muslim Santitham Foundation School (โรงเรียนมุสลิมสันติธรรม) is an educational institutions in southern Thailand, precisely in Village No.3, Nakhian Subdistrict, Mueang District, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Thailand. This institution provides learning from kindergarten (TK), elementary school (SD), and junior high school (SMP) for Muslim students. Foreign language learning has been carried out since elementary school, namely English and Arabic. Meanwhile, the Malay language is added as one of the compulsory subjects for junior high school students.

This study attempts to analyze and describe 1) the effectiveness of integrating children's songs in BIPA learning at the Elementary School of Muslim Santitham Foundation School, 2) the benefits of children's songs in BIPA learning at the Elementary School of Muslim Santitham Foundation School, and 3) the obstacles and challenges that arise in the integration of BIPA learning with children's songs at SD Muslim Santitham Foundation School.

METHOD

This study was a qualitative descriptive study aimed at obtaining an in-depth picture of the BIPA learning process at the elementary school level, especially with the integration of children's songs. This study took place at the Muslim Santitham Foundation School, Nakhian District, Mueang District, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Thailand. This study was conducted on July 10, 2024, with the research subjects being 32 elementary school students at the Muslim Santitham Foundation School who were elementary BIPA learners (level 1 or A1).

The research procedure was carried out by conducting observation, coordination, and evaluation. Observation was carried out by directly observing the location and research subjects to be able to find out the class phenomenon and determine initial needs. Coordination was carried out by uniting the direction, activities, and learning objectives with the relevant responsible teacher, Mrs. Nadda Adam, as the homeroom teacher of class 5-1. Evaluation was carried out by analyzing the extent to which learning objectives had been achieved by looking at learning outcomes.

The instruments used in this study include observation sheets, semi-structured interview guidelines, and documentation of student learning outcomes. Data collection techniques used in this study were direct observation, interviews with class teachers, and documentation of learning outcomes. The data analysis technique used in this study was qualitative descriptive analysis with the Miles and Huberman interactive model approach, which consists of three main steps: 1) data reduction, 2) data presentation, and 3) concluding/verification.

The learning strategies used in this study are TPR (Total Physical Response), Learning by Doing, and Game-Based Learning with an emphasis on the integration of children's songs.

This strategy includes the use of visual media, children's songs, and interactive activities such as language games and simple dialogues that are relevant to students' daily lives. This approach was chosen to make the students more easily understand and internalise basic Indonesian vocabulary and language structures.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After conducting research related to the integration of children's songs with the theme of family members in BIPA learning for 32 elementary school students at the Muslim Santitham Foundation School.

Table 1. Accuracy of Filling in the Family Folding Book

No	Family members	Number of Errors	Percentage
1	Father	2	6.25
2	Mother	0	0
3	Older brother	5	15,625
4	Younger brother	4	12.5
	Total	11	8.59375

Table 1 illustrates the level of accuracy of filling in the family flip book by students, based on the category of family members, including father, mother, older brother, and younger brother. From the data, it can be seen that the category "father" recorded 2 errors or 6.25% of the total errors, which indicates that a small number of students have not written or recognized the vocabulary correctly.

In the category of "mother", there are no errors at all, with the number of errors 0 or 0%, which shows that students are very familiar with the term. Furthermore, in the category of "older sibling" with the findings of 5 errors or 15.625%, while the category of "younger sibling" had 4 errors or 12.5%.

These results show that although most students are able to fill in the blanks quite well, there are still errors, especially in vocabulary that may be less familiar or confusing, such as "older brother" and "younger sibling", which in some cultural or linguistic contexts may have different equivalents.

Meanwhile, the results of teaching color vocabulary through the song "*Pelangi Pelangi*" and coloring family members' flipbooks obtained the following data.

Table 2. Flipbook Coloring Accuracy according to Instructions

No	Family members	Number of Coloring Errors	Percentage (%)
1	Red	2	6.25
2	Yellow	2	6.25
3	Green	4	12.5
4	Blue	1	3,125
	Total	9	7,03215

Meanwhile, the results of teaching color vocabulary through the song "*Pelangi-Pelangi*" combined with the activity of coloring family members' flipbooks showed quite positive achievements. Based on the data obtained, the level of coloring errors made by students was relatively low overall.

Green occupies the highest position in the number of coloring errors (four errors or 12.5%). This indicates that green is still a challenge for some students in understanding and

remembering the instructions given. Meanwhile, red and yellow each experienced two errors, with a percentage of 6.25%. This figure shows that most students are able to recognize and apply the two colors quite well. Meanwhile, blue is the color with the lowest error rate (one error or 3.125%), indicating that this color is the easiest for students to recognize and understand.

Overall, there are nine errors from all coloring activities, with an average error rate of 7.03%. This figure shows that the approach to learning color vocabulary through song media and coloring activities is quite effective in helping students recognize and apply color vocabulary. However, these results also indicate the need for additional strategies or reinforcement of learning, especially for colors that still confuse, such as green.

Effectiveness of Children's Song Integration in BIPA Learning

The effectiveness of children's song integration in elementary BIPA learning for elementary school children at the Muslim Santitham Foundation School can be said to be quite high. This is because learners are interested in teachers from Indonesia, whom they rarely meet. In addition, songs also increase student involvement, strengthen vocabulary memory, and create a fun learning atmosphere by the world of children. This is evidenced by the percentage results, which show a fairly low error rate.

In addition, songs provide auditory stimuli that make it easier for students to understand Indonesian pronunciation and intonation. The song of family members' names and "Pelangi Pelangi" practiced at the Elementary School of Muslim Santitham Foundation School helps students remember and use vocabulary more naturally. The learning process, accompanied by songs and teachers who use the TPR strategy, also fosters enthusiasm and passion in the classroom, making students more active in participating in learning activities.

Benefits of Children's Songs in BIPA Learning

Children's songs have various benefits in learning basic BIPA. First, the songs used can help introduce vocabulary and sentence structures in a simple and easy-to-remember context. For example, learners can use the simple sentence "this is my father" after singing a song about family members' names. The melody and repetition in the song also strengthen students' memory and understanding of the language being learned. Second, songs create a fun and non-burdensome learning atmosphere, thus helping students be more active and confident in using Indonesian. Third, through singing together, students learn to practice their speaking and listening skills naturally and increase their involvement in the learning process. Fourth, through integration with the Game-based Learning strategy, students who color flipbooks can better remember the names of colors in Indonesian with fun motor activities.

Barriers to Integrating Children's Songs in BIPA Learning

Despite its many benefits, the integration of children's songs in BIPA learning at the Elementary School of Muslim Santitham Foundation School also faces several obstacles. One of the main obstacles is the limited number of songs that are appropriate to the students' language ability level. The song "*Pelangi Pelangi*" contains vocabulary that is too complex and unfamiliar to elementary school students, so it needs adjustment or additional explanation.

*Pelangi, pelangi, **alangkah** indahmu
Merah, kuning, hijau di langit yang biru
Pelukismu **agung**, siapa **gerangan**?
Pelangi, pelangi, ciptaan Tuhan
Pelangi, pelangi, alangkah indahmu*

Merah, kuning, hijau di langit yang biru

Some words, such as “*alangkah*”, “*agung*”, and “*perangan*”, are difficult to understand and explain to elementary learners. Without the help of a teacher or translator, there are many difficulties in organizing the class because children at the Elementary School of the Muslim Santitham Foundation School can only use their national language. Another obstacle is the limited audio media or technology facilities. Although there are speakers that can be used at the Elementary School of Muslim Santitham Foundation School, additional projector media can make learning more effective.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results, it can be concluded that the integration of children’s songs in BIPA learning at the Elementary School of Muslim Santitham Foundation School has proven quite effective in helping students understand basic vocabulary, especially those related to family members and colors. The children’s songs used have succeeded in creating a fun learning atmosphere, increasing student participation, and strengthening their memory and pronunciation skills.

However, the learning process still faces a number of challenges, including limited vocabulary in the songs used, communication constraints between teachers and students, and limited supporting facilities such as audio-visual media. This shows that the method used is effective, but its success is still influenced by the readiness of materials, media, and support from local accompanying teachers.

Based on these findings, it is suggested that the selection of songs in BIPA learning be adjusted to the level of students’ understanding. Songs with complex vocabulary need to be simplified or explained first. Teachers are also advised to work more intensively with local teachers so that language and cultural barriers can be better overcome. In addition, the provision of adequate learning media such as projectors, audio-speakers, or interactive visual materials will greatly assist the learning process.

Furthermore, this learning approach, combining songs, visuals, and movements, is worthy of being replicated in other schools, especially in areas that have cultural and historical proximity to Indonesia. The BIPA program will be a means of language learning, functioning as a bridge to strengthen cultural and educational relations between countries.

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