

## THE ASSISTANCE OF ENGLISH LEARNING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN JAKARTA'S ORPHANAGE

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### *Abstract*

*The community partnership program was administered in the form of online assistance for English learning of the grade X of senior high school students. The partner was an orphanage belonging to the local government in DKI Jakarta Province. The objective of the assistance program was to motivate the English learning and find the solution for their problem in understanding English at school. Fourteen boys participated in this program. One meeting was held in the orphanage with the person in charge and four asynchronous meetings with the participants were conducted in three months. In practice, most of the students showed their motivation in terms of involving the English discussion and completing the tasks as well. Unfortunately, the signal of internet connection did not support the online learning and some of the students were in quarantine due to coronavirus infection. In conclusion, they were not ready to study online as several obstacles arose such as the weak internet signal and their absences. Therefore, they need to study English in a room with a teacher where all of them can communicate with each other in a friendly atmosphere. By doing so, they are possible to improve their English mastery.*

**Keywords:** *asynchronous; community partnership program; orphanage, English learning*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The ministry of education and culture of Indonesia stated in public to perform online learning from primary up to tertiary education (MONEC, 2020) because of the COVID-19 outbreak worldwide. By using this approach, the majority of students of senior high school feel stressed and fatigued. They have to stay at home with less social interaction and submit the tasks from their teachers (Brazendale et al., 2017). Hence, it turns out to be a priority to evaluate the model to speed up the recovery of national education throughout the pandemic (Yarrow, et al., 2020). As World Bank Group Education is concerned to claim that students who experience online learning during a pandemic may become a "lost generation". The reason was a lack of optimal learning (World Bank Group Education, 2020).

Regarding to that situation, English education program of Sekolah Tinggi Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan (STKIP) Kusuma Negara carried out the community partnership activity in an orphanage named Panti Sosial Asuhan Anak (PSAA) Putra Utama 3 in East Jakarta. This activity was in line with the STKIP mission, namely to conduct the community service program. Such activities were also organized in the past i.e. English program for community service (Subekti and Kurniawati, 2020; Subekti and Rumanti, 2020; Subekti and Susyetina, 2019).

Panti Sosial Asuhan Anak (PSAA) Putra Utama 3 located in Cipayung District, East Jakarta. The land is 12.000 m<sup>2</sup> where the area for building is about 2.300 m<sup>2</sup>. DKI Jakarta government has the responsibility to manage PSAA. The mission of this orphanage is to improve the quality of services for children in terms of social development and increase their dignity and quality of life. The people who live there are considered as (1) state children, who are grown up in the orphanage since a baby, (2) community children, who are poor children, orphaned, or children of being neglected by their family, (3) special children, whom their parents neglect their children

for several particular reasons, and (4) inclusive children with special needs, for example, who are intellectually retarded.

There are approximately 90 children who stay in PSAA. Their ages are between 12 up to 19 years old. They went to school and were picked up by bus before the pandemic outbreak. Currently, they remain in the orphanage due to the online learning policy. They were unable to go anywhere. The children get nutritious food three times a day and sleep on beds. The facilities are a field for sports activities, a prayer room for worship, a kitchen, an official residence, a library or study room. PSAA provides laptops and cellphones as well as internet connections for children to study with online learning mode.

Based on the information from PSAA, the children's ability of English mastery was poor. Therefore they need assistance from the public to handle this weakness. Moreover, the government implemented online learning which made them more difficult to understand English lessons and do the home works. Two years ago PSAA provided a budget to be used for increasing children's achievement in academics. Therefore, they could hire some teachers to come to PSAA and teach them. Now, the children should study by themselves. In short, the children were badly in need, especially to learn English.

## 2. METHOD

The partner was a female civil servant who acted like a person in charge named Miss Goura and 14 male students of senior high school who sit in grade X. We conducted a consultation with her on 29 June 2021. The place was in the PSAA by obeying the health protocol because of a pandemic. We had a talk outdoor and everyone wore a mask. Finally, our agreement settled that the online learning of English mastery would be held in four times asynchronous model using a group of chat applications and a Google form. We recorded the students' English achievement when they were in grade IX.

The participants were 14 students i.e. 7 graduated from state junior high school and 2 graduated from private junior high school. Two students graduated from Islamic state junior high. One student was from the state vocational high school of grade X because he was often absent and did not complete their assignments. Therefore he remained in grade X. The rest were categorized as children with special needs named intellectually retarded. The following is their data of junior high school English scores and the school's name where they are studying now in grade X.

**Table 1**  
**Students' English Mark**

No	Initial Name	English Mark	School Name	Major
1.	MF	72	SMAN 64	Science
2.	AA	72	SMAN 64	Social
3.	AY	72	SMAN 64	Social
4.	Rn	75	SMAN 64	Social
5.	IRZ	76	SMAN 64	Social
6.	Sy	73	SMK 58	DKV <sup>1)</sup>
7.	IBS	76	SMK 52	Aut <sup>2)</sup>
8.	HS	79	SMK 52	Aut <sup>2)</sup>
9.	RS	79	SMK 52	Aut <sup>2)</sup>
10.	MIA	79	SMK <sup>3)</sup>	Adm <sup>4)</sup>
11.	ME	0 <sup>5)</sup>	SMK <sup>3)</sup>	Adm <sup>4)</sup>
12.	P	73	HS <sup>6)</sup>	
13.	I	85	HS	
14.	M	74	SMK 24	Hos <sup>7)</sup>

Note: <sup>1)</sup> *Design Communicative visual*, <sup>2)</sup> *Automotive*, <sup>3)</sup> *Citra Dharma*, <sup>4)</sup> *Administration*, <sup>5)</sup> *the family still kept the rapport*, <sup>6)</sup> *Homeschooling*, <sup>7)</sup> *Hospitality*

According to the PIC, the English scores written in the table above were not a mirror of the student's actual abilities. Usually, the mark was to meet the standard of completeness criteria value (KKM) following the school policies. The policy for determining the KKM score differed from one school to another.

The whole meetings were managed using a Whatsapp group consisting of 14 participants and one PIC. On 16 July 2021, the students filled out the form with the link <https://forms.gle/NQA1bDh1HNWhhwoj6>. This was regarded as the first meeting. The information from the form was divided into four aspects, (1) technical and non-technical problems during online learning that the students had, (2) students opinions about English subjects that they have studied, (3) students motivation to learn English so far and (4) the way, the students prefer to learn English.

The second meeting was held on 21 July 2021. The participants were asked to complete the task concerning English skills, namely reading, writing, and listening. The skills measured were intended for young learners which were suitable for their ability. The material was adapted from <https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/test-your-english/young-learners/>. The content of the English test was designed based on the level of difficulty and completed by live worksheet so that they may gain the score automatically.

The third meeting was held on 26 July 2021. This time, the participants focused on reading and listening exercises. They could do the tasks by clicking the link of <https://continuingstudies.uvic.ca/elc/studyzone/200> for the upper beginner level. The University of Victoria in Australia created this material supported by the corrected answers. This is to promote self-regulated learning. A study by Dong, C et al., (2020) demonstrated that parents perceived online learning effectiveness as low since their children's self-regulation is weak. Therefore, the participants were encouraged to improve their English skills independently.

The fourth meeting was managed on 3 August 2021. We played a song by Maher Zain, a famous singer in Indonesia from Sweden. The title is *Jannah* (Paradise). The song was supported by the English subtitle for the participants could sing as well. The source was available in the link <https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=maher+zain+jannah+>. The aim of giving them a song was to make them feel happy when learning English as well as to improve their listening comprehension (Simanjuntak and Uswar, 2021; Lestary and Seriadi, 2019; Lengkoan' 2017).

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The assistance of English learning was conducted through a group of chat applications. It was found that only five participants filled the online survey. The rest participants were in quarantine in Kemayoran, Central Jakarta because of coronavirus infection. In the orphanage, every participant did not have a cellular phone or laptop. They use these devices for sharing with others. Therefore, we faced some hindrances to starting online learning. Additionally, the internet connection did not support learning activities. Most of the students did not have access to use the internet connection both in the orphanage in Cipayung and Kemayoran. They have to support themselves online. As a result, we could not use the Zoom application because they could not gather at the same time.

Apart from the facilities, the majority of participants gave their opinion that they like English. On the contrary, all of them agreed that English is difficult. All of them stated that they did not have a strong motivation to learn English. Some of them preferred to learn English with the teacher. Shortly, they like to listen to the teacher's explanation for studying English.

Some participants like to watch cartoon movies, listen to a song, use the application and browse through websites in improving their English competencies. No one chose to read a book or listen to a podcast for developing their English mastery. It seems that reading was not a preferred way to increase English knowledge.

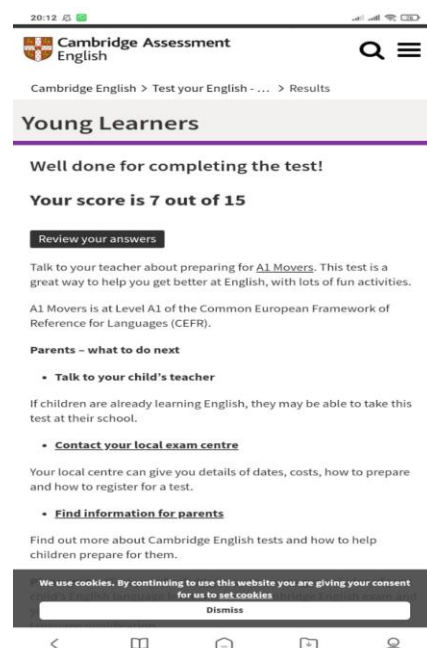
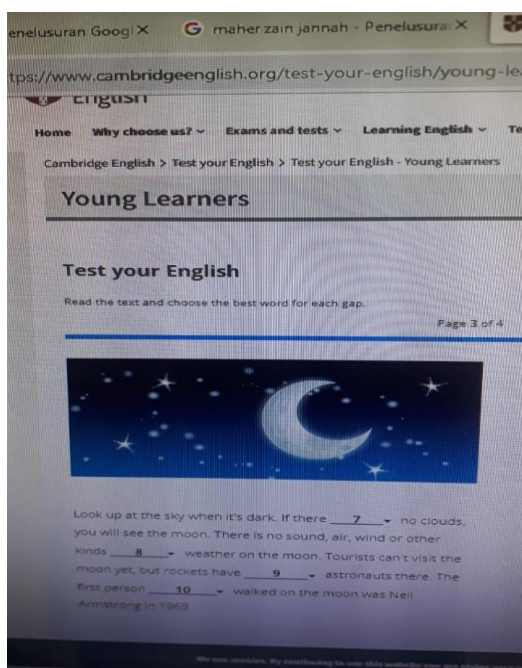
Seven participants out of 14 completed the test for young learners. The test was adopted from cambridgeenglish.org and was created for encouraging students to study personally. There were a total of 15 multiple-choice questions. Three questions were for identifying the pictures. Three questions were for understanding the daily conversation. Four questions were for English structure by filling the blanks. Five questions were for listening comprehension about professions and people activity. In other words, the test covered English skills. Their test result was summarized as follows.

**Table 2. Students Result Test**

No	Initial Name	Correct Answer
1.	IRZ	11
2.	MF	6
3.	AA	7
4.	Sy	7
5.	HS	6
6.	Rn	11
7	RS	10

Four participants had a low score and the rest were above average. No one has a score below 10. The obtained scores indicated that they were in need to improve their English mastery. Ideally, their English ability was not at the level of basic. Consequently, this proved that their English ability was poor.

The participants admitted that the most difficult part was listening and structure. They rarely practice listening to a conversation or watching a movie in English was the main reason. They also did not understand well about English grammar. In other words, they still have confusion about English. The following is the example of the test for structure by choosing the options to fill the blanks and the score achieved by a participant.



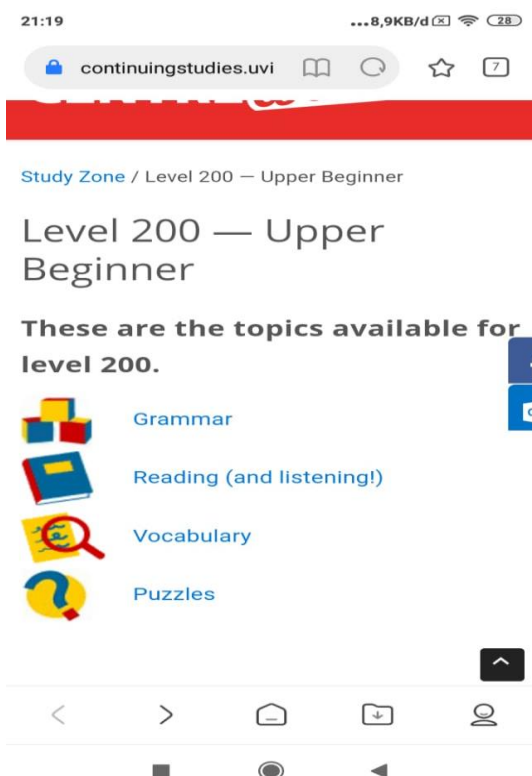
**Figure 1. English Test**

The next meeting focused on the reading and listening task. The participants completed the reading tasks including the reading questions and vocabulary development made of the English Language Center of University Victoria. All the questions were in the form of multiple choices too. Through the website, they might read the story as well as listen to that story. These were beneficial activities to train reading and listening skills. After that, they selected the options for reading tasks. They were also informed of the correct answers. One of the participants said that this website was useful for him to train his learning. The others stated this was their first experience learning English through a website and they felt exciting because they might replay the video as many as they want.

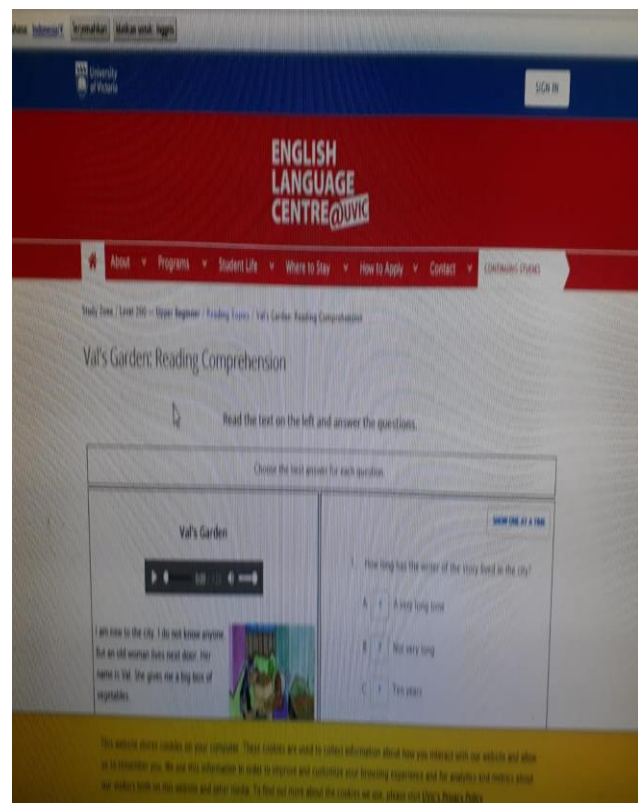
They read the story entitled Val’s Garden. The story introduced the past tense. The main point was the participants understood the story in the form of narrative text in a video. They also had a chance to develop the vocabularies found in the text as well as to create their own story in a provided space. This activity implemented the knowledge process (KP) framework of the multi literacies approach of applying creatively (Rowland, 2014). They were able to make a story by themselves after finding some inspiration through the story.

Eight participants were involved in this meeting. Six participants had difficulty joining due to internet connection as they were still in quarantine. They were excited and we discussed their problems in completing the tasks. Mostly, they showed some weakness in vocabulary so it made them feel a little frustrated to understand the story. As the main vocabulary i.e. the verbs were written in the form of past tense, they were suggested to memorize the verbs of different forms. It seemed that they need further explanation about the grammar, especially the verb forms. Furthermore, the participants were challenged to broaden their knowledge relevant to the vocabulary building acquired in the story.

**Figure 2 Participant’s Score**



**Figure 3. The Level of the Test**



**Figure 4. Reading Text**

The last meeting was to listen to a song by Maher Zain entitled *Jannah*. The participants were interested to listen to the song. Through the lyrics, the participants learn some sentences concerning the paradise concept relating to Islamic teaching. Those sentences were divided into two themes, namely the world and paradise.

The participants were asked to find out the sentences that belong to the description of the world and paradise. It was discovered that the lyric with the idea of the world is three expressions. They were “this life is only finite”, “this life is not eternal”, “the good and the bad times will all be left behind.

Various lyrics about paradise are four expressions “to the finest place for infinity”, A blissful life eternally, “the moment I see You”, “Allah and meet Muhammad with all his companions”, “in the place no eye has ever seen filled with love, peace, and tranquility”. The song mainly described paradise and how the singer wishes to be there after he dies to see his God.

## **Discussion**

The online assistance for English learning program was conducted using the principle of multiliteracies approach. There was an emphasis on teachers creating materials and tasks that encourage students to engage with learning material through the different knowledge processes. In that program the teachers or facilitators adopted the learning material from official websites to meet the criteria of the multiliteracies approach, namely, experiencing, conceptualizing, analyzing, and applying. This approach followed the KP framework (Rowland, 2014).

For the first meeting, the participants implemented the experiencing of known knowledge. The reason was they had to deliver their experiences of studying English both in senior high school and in elementary school. Their opinion about English so far was recorded using Google form which was already familiar for them. It was found that they felt English is a difficult subject so they felt comfortable learning English with a teacher or face-to-face rather than through online learning or reading the books. This reflected that the concept of pedagogy could not be applied to them. Heutagogy is the concept of self-determination, how individuals determine their own learning experiences to achieve their goals and values (Lustyantie and Arung, 2020). The reason was the participants depended much on the teacher to learn English. They did not know how to overcome their problem in English. Therefore, they need assistance to encourage them in learning English.

For the second meeting, the participants joined in the online learning of English test for young learners. This activity trained them to activate their critical thinking because the questions asked more about evaluating and analyzing processes concerning many themes such as the daily professions and people activity. This was in line with the competence of 21 century for students. The student's skills in the 21st century that need to be developed include (1) critical thinking and problem-solving, (2) communication, (3) creativity and innovation, (4) collaboration. These four skills are integrated into the learning process based on the 2013 curriculum (Abidin et al, 2015).

For the third meeting, the participants had conceptualizing theory activities as they had to identify the verb of past tense in the narrative story. Likewise, they also had an opportunity to develop their vocabulary that they grasped from the story with similar meaning. Such kind of learning was encouraged them to enhance their critical thinking. They could read and listen to the story as well as look at the picture of Val's garden. Briefly, this activity could be considered as watching a video. Furthermore, the skill develops from watching the video are not limited to listening but also writing and reading (Jufriadi, et al, 2019). Besides the activity of watching, the participants were also asked to complete the reading task which lead them to the experience of the Self Organized Learning Environment (SOLE) by using innovative learning with

asynchronous mode (Yuki, 2021). The material of learning was completed with the correct answer so that the participants were able to measure their English ability themselves.

For the last meeting, the participants listened to the song of Maher Zain “Jannah”. They also applied the problem-solving activity regarding the competence of 21 century for students. They evaluated the lyric of the song by concluding the sentences or expressions of the situation in paradise and the world. Therefore, they were also trained to think using HOTS (*high order thinking skills*). These characteristics of higher-order thinking skills refer to the cognitive level of Bloom's taxonomy which has been revised, namely analyzing, evaluating, and creating (Anderson, et al, 2001).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The inference was drawn in line with the program of English learning during the covid-19 pandemic in PSAA. In general, the participants had low motivation to learn English and they preferred to study English with the teacher in a room where they might have a communication face to face. It should be acknowledged that most of them had boredom to learn English through online mode due to some obstacles.

However, they felt enthusiastic to complete the questions using their critical thinking ability when completing the test. The test was dedicated to young English learners. By conducting the test and receiving the result we could measure their ability in English which is poor. For reading and listening comprehension the participants proved their eagerness to read and listen to the story about Val's garden. It seemed that they experienced a new way of learning English by watching a video. Moreover, they could gain the correct answers to the reading task right away. This was such kind of unforgettable learning for them using the information technology advancement. When the participants listened to the song “Jannah” they felt relaxed and excited. They could increase their skill, especially listening as well as could practice the high order thinking skill by evaluating the lyric of the song. To sum up, the English online learning was successful even though there were several obstacles faced by participants.

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