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English learning method with "MASAK" (*Mudah, Asyik, Santai, Aktif, Kreatif*) for *Santri* of Islamic Boarding School Daar El Nayl, Cilebut Timur, Bogor, West Java: A Simple, engaging, relaxed, active, and creative approach to ESP learning in Islamic boarding schools

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ABSTRACT

Education is the key to improving the quality of the nation's youth. Enhancing educational quality is expected to produce reliable human resources. High-quality human resources will enable Indonesia to compete with other countries worldwide. In this era of globalization, future generations are required to keep up with developments in science and technology. One of the key demands is effective communication. English proficiency is crucial as it serves as an international language. Learning English as a foreign language is best introduced at an early age for a smoother learning process. Pondok Pesantren Daar el Nayl is a newly established Islamic boarding school located far from urban centers. English learning at this pesantren still relies on conventional methods. Implementing the "MASAK" learning method (*Mudah, Asyik, Santai, Aktif, Kreatif*—Easy, Fun, Relaxed, Active, Creative) is expected to help students understand and apply basic English actively. The implementation techniques include introduction, learning, evaluation, and review. The results of this study indicate that the "MASAK" method significantly contributes to increasing students' enthusiasm for learning English. The study concludes that a structured and engaging approach to learning English can improve comprehension and practical communication skills among *santri* in pesantren environments.

1. Introduction

Education is an essential asset for a nation's progress. Students require appropriate educational services tailored to their characteristics in line with their growth and development. Education should be provided from an early age so that children can

quickly familiarize themselves with their environment. Early childhood education is expected to prepare children for the future. Providing education to young children is not solely the responsibility of parents but also involves the surrounding environment, society, and formal educational institutions.

Foreign language learning, particularly English, is crucial for competing internationally. In major cities across Indonesia, many formal educational institutions have already established high-quality standards. However, the situation is different in remote areas, where access to quality education remains a challenge. One such area is Cilebut Timur, a rural village in the Sukaraja district of Bogor Regency. In this village, access to the city is relatively far, and most residents work as traders.

Several challenges were encountered while implementing a community service program at Pondok Pesantren Daar el Nayl in Cilebut Timur, Sukaraja, Bogor. One of the main challenges is determining a practical approach for engaging school-aged children, particularly the *santri*. A suitable approach is crucial to ensure that the *santri* receives learning well. Additionally, their familiarity with basic education is a concern, as a strong foundational understanding is essential in the learning process, especially in English language education. Another challenge is creating an enjoyable learning atmosphere so the *santri* become interested and enthusiastic about learning English. A learning experience that children find enjoyable will significantly boost their motivation and academic performance.

2. Literature review

Several studies have highlighted the significance of interactive and engaging language learning methods. Previous research suggests that game-based and interactive approaches improve language acquisition (Brown, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). According to Harmer (2007), the effectiveness of English language learning depends mainly on the teaching methods used. The traditional lecture method has been proven less effective in language acquisition, particularly in non-native English-speaking environments.

Studies by Slattery & Willis (2001) and Tomlinson (2011) also support the idea that active, creative, and fun learning methods are more effective in engaging students and ensuring long-term retention of language skills. The "MASAK" method incorporates various elements of these modern approaches, making it an innovative way to teach English in pesantren environments. Furthermore, incorporating multimedia learning and cooperative learning strategies has enhanced student engagement and fostered collaborative learning, thereby improving language acquisition.

3. Methods

The study employed a qualitative approach involving direct observation and evaluation of the MASAK method. The stages include:

- Introduction: Familiarizing students with basic English vocabulary through engaging storytelling, visual aids, and real-life examples to make vocabulary more relatable.
- Learning: Engaging students through interactive games, songs, and role-playing activities to make learning enjoyable and less intimidating. This phase includes practical communication exercises to ensure students practice language use actively.
- Evaluation: Conduct periodic assessments to measure students' progress, using quizzes, oral tests, and group presentations to assess comprehension and communication skills.
- Review: Reinforcing learned materials through group discussions, peer teaching methods, and real-world simulations to ensure long-term retention.

Data was collected through interviews with teachers and students, classroom observations, and assessment results. The findings were analyzed qualitatively to assess the effectiveness of the learning method. The research also measured student engagement and motivation levels through structured feedback forms and direct student participation tracking.

4. Results

Findings indicate a significant improvement in students' English proficiency using the MASAK method. The interactive nature of the approach increased students' enthusiasm and participation. Many *santri* initially had difficulty with English pronunciation and grammar, but their confidence and fluency improved noticeably after implementing the method.

5. Discussion

The use of technology, such as video presentations and digital flashcards, further enhanced learning outcomes. Teachers also benefited from structured learning strategies, making teaching and monitoring students' progress easier (Williams & Jackson, 2019). Additionally, the study found that students who participated in peer-teaching activities showed excellent language retention and confidence when speaking in English (Smith, 2020).

Figure 1. Implementation of the MASAK method

Figure 1 illustrates a classroom setting where the MASAK method is being implemented. The students actively engage in learning activities, demonstrating increased participation compared to traditional methods. Figure 2 shows students focused on the teacher's instructions, highlighting the effectiveness of interactive learning techniques in maintaining student engagement.

Figure 2. Santri listening to the instructor

Figure 3. Group photo with the teachers

Figure 3 captures a moment at the end of the learning session, showing a sense of achievement and camaraderie among students and teachers. It signifies the success of the MASAK method in fostering an enjoyable learning atmosphere. Each figure plays a crucial role in providing visual representation and context to the study findings.

6. Conclusion

The MASAK method effectively enhanced students' English proficiency at Pondok Pesantren Daar el Nayl. The combination of interactive learning, technology, and fun-based teaching strategies contributed to a more engaging educational experience. The results suggest that the implementation of this method can be extended to other pesantren to improve foreign language education in rural areas. Future research can explore how digital platforms and artificial intelligence-assisted learning could further enhance English education for students in Islamic boarding schools.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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