

**The Impacts of Using Nursery Rhymes in Teaching English**

*A Skripsi*

**Submitted to Language Education Faculty as a Partial Fulfillment of the  
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# Approval Page

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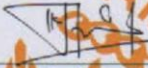
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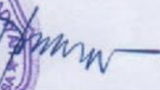
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## **Abstract**

This research focuses on seeing the impacts of using nursery rhymes in teaching English as perceived by English elementary school teachers. This research is conducted under a descriptive qualitative research design. The participants for the study are elementary school English teachers who works in Makassar, Sulawesi Selatan. The participants' involved in this research are four teachers. The participants were purposefully selected based on certain criteria. The first criteria for this research participants is, must be an English teacher in elementary schools in Makassar, Sulawesi Selatan. The second impact is the participants have used Nursery rhymes in teaching process for collecting the data the researcher used a semi-structured interview to gain detailed and depth data from the participants. The result from the research found 6 impacts that they perceived when they teach using nursery rhymes. The first impact is nursery rhymes help teachers teach new vocabularies to students. The second impact is nursery rhyme can help teachers improve students' interests. The third impact is nursery rhymes can help teachers teach positive moral value. The fourth impact is nursery rhymes can help teachers to train students listening, speaking, and pronunciation skill. The fifth impact is nursery rhymes Help teachers to get the students more physically active. The last impact is nursery rhymes can help create a more active and fun learning atmosphere.

*Keyword:* TEYL, Young learners, teaching tools, Nursery rhyme

## **Background of the study**

English is an international language that is almost used in all parts of the world. This statement is supported by Crystal (2003), who mentioned that in the early year of 2000 English is already used by a quarter from the total population in this world. In Indonesia, especially, English has become one of the languages learned in almost every stage of formal education. English has also become one of the languages used in all aspects of Indonesian lives, such as education, health, politics, and government. Therefore, English subject is given to students since their early stage of learning. Early stage of learning begins since their parents teach them how to speak. However, in this study, the early stage means the early stage of formal education, that is, the elementary school. English in Indonesian elementary schools are not categorized as a compulsory subject. According to Ministry of Education and Culture (2013), there are some simplification for Elementary school subjects Indonesia, one of them is removing English subject. The students are asked to focus on learning basic subjects and build up their Indonesian language first. English lesson will start to be learned when the students enter their junior high schools. English subjects are still able to be taught but as an extracurricular.

In Indonesia, the elementary students, aged between 7 until 12 years old, are at the level of middle childhood in terms of their level of physiology development. This age is the perfect time to learn a new language, which is different from their mother language or their first language.

Teaching young learners is different from teaching adult. It will be important to include age appropriate materials in the classes. Age appropriate materials mean materials that are suitable for young learners' level. According to

Hermansyah, Handayani, and Wulandari (2008), kids have very low level of concentration, usually, cannot concentrate and be serious. According to Hendra (2004), most of the times, teaching method that only allows the students to read texts books will make the classroom situation boring , this will lead to remove the interest of studying on students.

Other techniques need to be employed for young learners. Games, singing, and storytelling are types of method that are usually used all over the country. As said before, young learners will need different method in learning and the learning environment have to be more fun and active. One of the common tools that teachers usually use to teach young learners are audio type material. According to Sudjana and Rival (2003), audio materials are teaching materials that contain messages or materials in the form of auditory (sound tape or disc), which can help to stimulate learners mind, feeling, concerns and the willingness of students in the learning process.

There are many kinds of audio type of materials that can be used in teaching and learning process such as songs, videos, movies, and rhymes. For teaching young learners, making a fun and unique classroom situation is good to gain their interest. According to Syahrul (2010), kids usually like to repeat on kind of activity or skills by practicing until they can really understand. Repeating something that is interesting for the kids can be implemented by using Nursery Rhymes. The use of nursery rhymes in teaching English for young learners are expected to make the learning environment more relaxing and fun. It can help to boost the interest of young learners to learn English. According to Brewster (2002), songs or rhyme can

be used in many ways in learning activity such as ice breaker, practicing language, and changing interests.

In teaching English, in Indonesia the researcher once experienced observing the teachers taught with less variety of teaching tools, such as using the same music and games for every level of the class. After sharing opinions with the teachers the researcher found out that the way the teachers choose the teaching tools are based on what they have used previously. So, when the teachers once used games they will keep on using games as their teaching tools. The researcher also found out that some teachers at that time did not know about nursery rhymes. However, the researcher have used nursery rhymes before, and can see how it can be beneficial in teaching English to elementary school students. From the explanation above the researcher is curious on seeing the impacts of using nursery rhymes in teaching English that is perceived by elementary school English teachers who have used it continently in their context.

## **Methodology**

This study is conducted using descriptive under the qualitative method. The researcher uses descriptive as a research design because it can help to describe teachers' perception on the impact of using nursery rhymes in teaching English to elementary students. According to Glass and Hopkins (1984), descriptive research study is a way to describe a problem then solve it, or it can help to describe a certain topic after a data collection. Descriptive research study aims to organize findings to make sure it is in line with literature review (Krathwohl, 1993).

The steps on getting the participants of this research is, the researcher finds a community that consists teachers in Makassar, Sulawesi. After founding the community, the researcher selected the teachers that are English elementary school teachers. From this step the researcher found eleven elementary school teachers from 48 teachers in the community. From eleven teachers that were selected the researcher asked individually to know which participants have used nursery rhymes before in their teaching process. From eleven English elementary school teachers there were only four teachers that know and have used nursery rhymes before.

The total participants involved in this study were four English teachers. For qualitative research the participants that is used to gather the data is usually purposive. It means that it does not focus on how much the participants that is involved, but on how the participant can generate useful data for the study (Patton & Cochran, 2002)

## **Finding and Discussion**

### **The impacts of using Nursery rhymes perceived by elementary school English teachers**

**Helping teachers teach new vocabularies to students.** The data collected from interviewing the participant is the base from this finding. The first impact conveyed by the first participant saying that “Nursery rhymes can teach new vocabularies to the students”. New vocabularies are gained from the words included in the nursery rhymes itself. After hearing and learning from the nursery rhymes, the students automatically learn or hear new words that they have not learn before. The result from participants supports the finding from Millington (2011), saying that the nursery rhymes can help students practice their vocabulary mastery.

Vocabulary in nursery rhymes usually consist monosyllabic words. To form a song the monosyllabic words are repeated. This will help the students remember a specific word, and automatically make the student vocabularies richer.

Not only helping the students learn new vocabularies, this research also showed that the nursery rhymes can also help students to understand and memorize a specific word. The first participant said that “the other impact after using nursery rhymes is the students can be helped to understand a specific word that is contained in the nursery rhyme”. The other result from the interview is said by the second participant. The second participant said that “students can understand the vocabularies included in the lyrics”. The participants explain that after teaching using nursery rhymes, students can understand the words included in nursery rhymes. This automatically will add the students' new vocabulary size. Not only helping to improve student understandings, the third participant added that “from listening to the nursery rhymes the students are easier to memorize, especially vocabularies”. This finding supports the finding from Brandon (2016), who said, nursery rhymes build early literacy. In nursery rhymes, there are so many repetitions of short words and phrases. Listening to the same phrase and word over and over again helps the young learners to improve their memory or cognitive development of new word or tone in the nursery rhymes

**Helping Teachers Improve Students Interest.** This is shown by the students that the participant teaches are happier. The second participant said “nursery rhymes is unique, they have a certain rhyme. Because of that, it can make the students happier and more active while learning. Besides that, this can also boost students' interest in learning English”. The second participant also added “Singing



can help make students emotion more stable. If there is a student not on the interest he or she can be happier when singing, especially when they know the meanings of the lyric”. In the end, if there is a specific student that has a problem outside the classroom and affects the student interest, nursery rhymes can help to bring back the student interest and help the student ready to learn and gain knowledge again. This can be also beneficial if the whole classroom is already bored with the learning process, the teacher can use the nursery rhymes to gain back the students focus and interest on the study.

The findings above support the finding from Bodden (2010), conveying that nursery rhymes can help the teachers to boost student motivation but not by words. So, the students listening to the nursery rhymes and dancing together will be more cooperative to the learning section itself. The teacher will no longer has to come up to the students individually and give them motivation to join and have fun while studying. But the nursery rhymes will help finish the problem. The other findings supported by the finding from this research is Ward's findings who claimed that nursery rhymes can stimulate the students interest, and make the students have a better learning process (1991). The stimulation from nursery rhymes can gain back students interest in learning therefore the materials that is delivered by the teacher is easier to stay inside students' mind.

**Helping Teachers Teach Positive moral value..** The first participant said that “the lyrics from nursery rhymes are usually stories or have stories to help the students learn good life value for their everyday activity. For example, The Wheels on the Bus has a lyrics that can help the students understand that it is not allowed to be noisy in public transports”. This finding is also agreed by the second

participant that mentioned a similar impact. The second participant said that “the lyrics from the nursery rhymes contain positive values that the students can learn”. Most of nursery rhymes contains life value that can be learned and memorized by the young learners.

This finding supports the findings from Djohan (2009), saying that from the nursery rhyme the students will also learn about values of life that the students will need in the following days. Nursery rhymes also contain everyday manners, so not only learning English but the students also learn other things in the same time. In additional, this research findings also support the findings from Dincel (2017), claiming that the lyrics of children songs or nursery rhymes contain several life value that can make the young learners grow with strong good life value. Dincel also explained that most of the value contained in the lyrics of nursery rhymes usually emphasize on a better world, environment, joyful life, and unity with the nature. This is important to know that the lyrics contained is not supposed to only make the students learn but also affects the students' souls in a positive way.

**Helping Teachers Train Students Listening, Speaking, and Pronunciation skills.** The first participant said that “students' listening and speaking skills are shown because the students sing and listen actually learn how to pronounce. So, both listening and speaking skills can be trained”. Beside that the third participant also added that “from listening the song the students are easier to memorize, especially vocabularies. They can also learn how to pronounce the word”. Listening skills is trained because the students will have to listen to the nursery rhyme first before memorizing the actual lyric. The student will hear the rhythm first and after listening to it several times, the students will start to pick up

the vocabularies they listen. The speaking skill is more improved from the students' ability to pronounce a word. The third participant added further that "nursery rhymes usually use word repetitions that will help the student to memorize a specific word. The better and clearer the pronunciation from the students will help them to use the word in their daily conversation later on.

This impact supports the finding from Murphey (1992), who concluded that the use of nursery rhymes can help the students to practice their listening and pronunciation skills. This could happen because if the teacher uses nursery rhymes in the classroom the students are forced to listen and while they listen they will repeat the words used in the nursery rhymes, especially if the teacher uses the same nursery rhymes several times. Besides that, nursery rhymes can help students practice their vocabulary learning, sentence structures, and sentence patterns.

In addition, the finding from this research also confirms Lo and Fai Li (1998), who found that nursery rhymes play an important role in motivating the L2 learners to learn English. They can support the development of L2 learners' skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking, as well as provide opportunities for learning pronunciation, rhythm, grammar and vocabulary.

**Allowing teachers to incorporate physical activities in teaching.** The second participant said "not only the students will be more active, from listening nursery rhymes the students can also demonstrate the movements that will match the lyrics from the nursery rhymes". Similarly, the third participant believes that "the motoric skills of students are also trained because the students will do movements based on the lyrics". Both participants agree that nursery rhymes can

help the students' physical development. The participant mean that the movement that the students do while the nursery rhymes is another way of showing their understanding of a specific word. For example, while saying the word "jump" the students will jump after the teacher give examples, and will continue doing the jump after several times of listening to the nursery rhymes. In the end the students will experience a new style of learning rather just sitting and listening to the teachers. The students can also move and dance when the nursery rhyme is being played.

This supports the finding from Kenney (2005), who said that nursery rhymes can help students' physical development. By singing them and moving with certain kind of motion in reacting to the words in the nursery rhymes the students will automatically help move their body following the rhythm. Nursery rhymes will motivate students to sing and dance while learning English. This will make the students feel more interested while learning. When the students are interested they will automatically sing along with the nursery rhymes and slowly remember the words form the nursery rhyme. The other finding supported by this research finding claimed that, student's movement made by following the music or nursery rhymes being played can develop children awareness of their bodies and make them learn on the movements that actually their body can do. This can also help students to be more confidence and have fine motoric skills (Jones, 2010).

**Creating fun and active learning atmosphere.** The second participant said “the nursery rhymes have a fun vibe that can make the classroom more active and fun”. Not only the second participant that feel this impact but the third participant also said “students are happier, more active, the classroom situation looks more fun”. The fourth participant also mentioned that “learning using nursery rhymes can

help the students to learn and make the classroom easier to control and teach rather than using the conventional way”.

Besides helping to change the classroom situation to be more fun and relaxing, nursery rhymes will also help the students to absorb the lesson easier. The students feel more like having fun rather than studying. This finding supports the finding that claimed teaching using nursery rhymes can provide students with a relaxing learning environment. This will make students more encouraged to communicate inside the classroom as they would feel more comfortable to express themselves (Pereira, 2010). The other finding similar to the finding of this research is that the students' boredom can be minimalized by using nursery rhymes and songs because they contain rhythm and melody that can help to make the teaching process less monotonous (Millington, 2011). Besides, this research findings also supports the finding that claimed Nursery rhymes or songs can create a learning atmosphere called *Edutainment*. The use of edutainment learning can boost students' attention and keep the students in a good emotion and interest. The edutainment classroom atmosphere can make the teaching process more enjoyable (Okan, 2003).

## **Conclusion**

The result from the research found 6 impacts that they perceived when they teach using nursery rhymes. The first impact is nursery rhymes help teachers teach new vocabularies to students. The second impact is nursery rhyme can help teachers improve students' interests. The third impact is nursery rhymes can help teachers teach positive moral value. The fourth impact is nursery rhymes can help teachers to train students listening, speaking, and pronunciation skill. The fifth impact is nursery rhymes Help teachers to get the students more physically active. The last impact is nursery rhymes can help create a more active and fun learning atmosphere.

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