English Teaching Assistant Program for Elementary School Teachers

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A B S T R A C T
To help the teaching and learning process, community service is carried out in two programs: designing digital student workbooks and assisting English language learning by integrating English for Young Learners activities. This study aims to report on implementing the English teaching assistant program for elementary school teachers. Descriptive research is used to describe activities that are expected to improve the teaching and learning process in the two partner schools. The subjects of this research were three elementary school teachers and six volunteer teachers from Indonesian students. This type of research is qualitative research. In collecting data, this research used interview and observation methods. The instruments used in this research include a list of interview questions for elementary school teachers and observation sheets to record the activities of English teaching assistants in the classroom. The approach used is descriptive because this research aims to describe an existing phenomenon: the English teaching assistant program for elementary school teachers at the Kuala Lumpur Indonesian School. Thus, the results of implementing the program show that community service has been carried out effectively to meet the needs of partner schools. Furthermore, teachers and school coordinators highlighted their positive feedback regarding the program results, indicating that the project team was successful in implementing the teaching assistant program in partner schools. In this way, the intended program presented to the community can be implemented effectively and is expected to continue in future partnerships.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Everyone needs access to education to implement and contribute to achieving the fifth sustainable development goal (SDGs), namely quality education. The SDGs aim to target the children of Indonesian Migrant Workers, better known as PMI (Bunga Wulandari et al., 2022; Rofifah, 2020). However, all levels of society must also have the same rights, including the ability to receive education. Therefore, the Kuala Lumpur Indonesian School (SIKL) is important in encouraging educational diplomacy in Malaysia, especially in developing Indonesian Human Resources (HR) based on the principles of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. Since its founding in 1969, SIKL has been dedicated to providing educational services to the Indonesian community in Malaysia by national education principles. Schools in Indonesia play an important role in preserving and promoting Indonesian culture in Malaysia and other friendly countries (Ahsani et al., 2020; Rosyidah, 2022).

To keep up with rapid progress in the fields of education and science, as well as global and modern trends, this educational institution, under the auspices of the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia (KBRI) Kuala Lumpur, is committed to pursuing excellence and high standards in education. This includes focusing on the quality of education, educational staff, facilities, output, and all other components that support the learning process inside and outside the school environment (Sulistianto et al., 2023; Yuliani & Yulianto, 2023). In 2013, the National Accreditation Board (BAN) accredited all levels of education, including elementary, middle, and high school, because it realized the importance of the role and presence of SIKL. In its education program, SIKL organizes three levels of schools: early childhood education (PG-TK), primary school education (SD), and primary school education (SMP-SMA). This school was founded on July 10, 1969, to initially facilitate Indonesian children who were then domiciled in Kuala Lumpur and was supported by the Indonesian Education and Cultural Attaché, the Indonesian Embassy (Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia) Malaysia, and the Malaysian Ministry of Education (Rosyidah, 2022; Setyani et al., 2021). SIKL’s contribution to national education is clear: trying to provide access to education for Indonesian children in Malaysia. Thus, the Indonesian Embassy and schools have open access to education through the Package A pursuit program for elementary school (SD), package B for junior high school (SMP) level, and package C for senior high school (SMA) level (Inayah et al., 2021; Wulandari et al., 2022).

In addition, to overcome the problems elementary school teachers face at SIKL, a needs analysis is needed before designing the program (Bekteshi & Xhaferi, 2020; Hazin et al., 2023). Needs analysis is a necessary first step in designing an English class, especially in designing English language learning materials (Astri et al., 2022; Trujeque-Moreno et al., 2021). The project team conducts a needs analysis before planning a community service program for partner schools. Based on the initial needs analysis and situation analysis, interviews with teachers revealed that they first need a professional development program to teach English in elementary schools. The principal observed that students in primary schools need to be facilitated with more exposure to English in their daily learning. School programs and environments are still limited, so students cannot practice English well. Apart from that, English is still a foreign language for Indonesian School Kuala Lumpur (SIKL) students. Primary school teachers highlighted needing more professional development and training in teaching methods and media, especially for English language learning. Therefore, by providing more interesting teaching methods and teaching media, students will be more interested in learning English (Daif-Allah & Aljumah, 2020; Sabgini & Khoiriyah, 2020).

Second, they need to improve their teaching methods. Based on interviews with the principal and homeroom teacher, it was found that the teaching strategies used in teaching English require some improvement. In particular, teachers in partner schools need to reform their teaching methods because the strategies used in teaching English to young students are very different from teaching English to adult students. The teacher’s role is very important in their students’ learning progress. Therefore, it is urgent to develop their teaching abilities. Lastly, they also need ready-to-use teaching resources, especially contextual ones based on the Independent Curriculum.

To overcome these challenges, the project team organized an English teaching assistant program for elementary school teachers at Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur (SIKL) in Malaysia. Based on the needs and situation analysis results, several skills are needed to implement the program. First, the program integrates Islamic content in elementary schools (School Indonesia Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia). Second, integration of locally based content (such as character education, Islamic content, Independent Curriculum, and English language learning in elementary schools). Lastly, the development of teaching materials.

Several relevant research results carry out community service activities carried out at SIKL. Research conducted by Nahdlatul ‘Ulama University (UNU) Surakarta students introduced worship education for students at the school. Carry out socialization and introduction to academic culture, implement student microteaching for tenth-grade social studies and science students. These activities support the implementation of an independent curriculum as a direction for government policy, where
students practice teaching directly to students at school. Moreover, this institution is a school located abroad (Ulum et al., 2023).

Furthermore, research was carried out to increase the spirit of nationalism and manifest people’s love for their homeland. This research was carried out because of globalization’s inevitable cultural onslaught and challenges. The results of this socialization were obtained before and after the socialization. In the Pancasila values aspect, there was an increase in understanding from an average of 81% to an average of 98%. In contrast, in the implementation aspect of Pancasila, there was an increase in understanding from an average of 84% to an average of 94% (Haryani et al., 2024).

Lastly, the research resulted in students’ need for more mastery of English. This research obtained evaluation results at the first meeting, which stated that 84% of students could introduce themselves in English correctly and fluently. In contrast, at the second meeting, 100% of students could complete worksheets with a score above 70. This community service activity was successful and smooth (Utomo et al., 2023). However, research must focus on reports on the results of community service programs, especially the teaching assistant program at SIKL. Therefore, this research aims to report the results of the community service program carried out by the project team at the Indonesian School Kuala Lumpur (SIKL). The program is an English teaching assistant program for elementary school teachers. Therefore, the results of this research are projected to contribute to future research gaps, so it is recommended that further research be conducted to improve the quality of teaching and learning at the Kuala Lumpur Indonesian School (SIKL), especially in English subjects.

2. METHOD

This type of research is qualitative because it aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences and perceptions of teachers and students towards the English teaching assistant program at the Kuala Lumpur Indonesian School. In collecting data, this research used interview and observation methods. Interviews were used to obtain information from elementary school teachers about their experiences using English teaching assistants. In contrast, observations were used to directly observe interactions between teachers and teaching assistants. The instruments used in this research include a list of interview questions for elementary school teachers and observation sheets to record the activities of English teaching assistants in the classroom. Meanwhile, the approach used is descriptive because this research aims to describe an existing phenomenon: the English teaching assistant program for elementary school teachers at the Kuala Lumpur Indonesian School.

The subjects involved were three elementary school teachers at SIKL and six volunteer teachers from Indonesian students. Community service is carried out in two programs to assist the teaching and learning process at SIKL: designing digital student workbooks and assisting English language learning by integrating English for Young Learners activities. This report uses descriptive analysis to describe the implementation of community service programs. Descriptive analysis is an analysis used to identify data so that it can be used to answer questions about who, what, where, when, and to what extent (Adlini et al., 2022; Waruwu, 2023). This research focuses on how to implement the English teaching assistant program for elementary school teachers at the Indonesian School Kuala Lumpur (SIKL). The project team collaborates with teachers at partner schools to implement the community service program. The overall program scheme is illustrated in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>School Partner Participation</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Analysis of needs for Professional Development training in teaching</td>
<td>Handle virtual collaboration regarding needs and situation analysis</td>
<td>Organizers: Project team, PMM International teachers and students in Malaysia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English to elementary school students (upper-grade students, school</td>
<td></td>
<td>Time allotment: April to August 2023.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>partner coordinators, project teams, and university students)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Organizers: Project team, students and teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>When: April to August 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Design of a digital activity book based on the Independent Curriculum</td>
<td>Actively participate in training and book design</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>using digital-based media (project team and students)</td>
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<td>No.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Implementing effective English teaching methods for elementary school students (Project team and teachers)</td>
<td>Actively participate in the implementation of teaching practices</td>
<td>Organizers: Project team and teachers Time allocation: August 2023</td>
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3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

First, prepare teaching materials. After conducting a needs analysis, the project team prepares teaching materials. The materials are designed as e-books to be copied and made easier for partner school teachers. The school partners are two schools supported by the Kuala Lumpur Indonesian School, namely the Permai Learning Center in Penang and the Indonesia Community Center (ICC) in Pahang Kuantan, Malaysia. The first step is designing a syllabus to implement an English language enrichment program for elementary students in daily teaching activities. Furthermore, the syllabus will create e-learning teaching materials and e-LKPD (digital student workbooks). The project team and teachers at partner schools conducted a needs analysis and designed the syllabus. One of the syllabuses covers grades 4 to 6. After completing the syllabus, the project team collaborated with PMM students and partner lecturers to design a digital workbook. One example of a digital workbook design is presented in Figure 1.

![Figure 1. Example of a Student Workbook](image)

Second, implementation of community service at the Permai Learning Center, Penang. Community service is carried out at two different partner schools. The first school partner is the Permai Learning Center. It is located at 12 G-2 Jalan Tun Dr. Awang Sg. Nimbel Kecil Bayan Lepas, 11900 Penang, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia. This learning center was initiated by Indonesian people living in Penang either for work or as permanent residents. This community was founded in 2019 by Khosaini and their colleagues from Indonesia and is registered with the Malaysian Body Protection Department (JPPM) Pulau Pinang. Some activities they participate in include building ties with Indonesian society, reciting the Koran, providing English language instruction, and acting as the vanguard of Indonesian education for children who cannot register for school in Malaysia due to lack of documents.

At this partner school, the project team accompanies teachers, including PMM students and volunteers, conducting online video conferences before implementing the one-day English program. By providing ready-to-use teaching materials designed from the start, teachers and volunteers at this school show their positive perception of the community service program. The following are examples of their statements during interviews.

Community service implementation activities at the Permai Learning Center, Penang, are presented in Figure 2.
“I think this program helps me prepare material for class, especially material that suits the needs of the students here” (Results of the first teacher interview).

“I just heard about CLIL, but after implementing this program, I am sure it will improve the quality of our students’ English learning” (School coordinator interview results).

“... Ehm..that (ready-to-use digital student workbook) will be useful for students because they can learn English with various media and learning activities. Thank you very much. We appreciate it.” (Third teacher interview results).

Figure 2. Permai Learning Center Students (Penang, Malaysia)

During the implementation of one-day English, the project team introduced teaching and learning activities to integrate the CLIL approach. CLIL is an abbreviation for Content and Language Integrated Learning, which describes teaching students in subjects such as mathematics, history, and science through a foreign language. In this activity, students learn English and Science simultaneously. The project team provided several CLIL activities for young students, such as singing a song called “Part of Plan,” group work activities counting the number of leaves, watching videos about the life cycle of trees, and many more. In this activity, students are expected to gain more input regarding language and content knowledge as a result of implementing the CLIL program as an enrichment program for partner schools. The activities of students taking part in English and Science learning and photos with the project team and PMM international coordinator are presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Students are Studying English and Science Simultaneously
Third, implementation of community service at the Indonesia Community Center (ICC) Pahang Kuantan. Indonesia Community Center (ICC) Pahang Kuantan is a learning community under the Indonesian School Kuala Lumpur Malaysia (SIKL). The number of students enrolled in this learning community needs adequate access to education; therefore, teaching assistance is needed. In this community service, students are taught English, which is integrated into Islamic content because all of them are Muslim. In this integration, students can learn the target language and religious values at the same time. The topic given is about the daily habits of Muslims, including the five daily prayers. Touching on their Muslim habits, they also study several aspects of the target language’s grammar, namely learning the simple present tense. They structure their sentences in the formula subject + verb 1 + complement. For example, I go to the mosque daily; My sister and I read the Koran after Maghrib prayers; I study the Koran with my teacher at night. The activity documentation is presented in Figure 4.

![Figure 4](image1.jpg)

**Figure 4.** Teaching English with Islamic Content to Young Students at the Indonesian Community Center Pahang Kuantan Malaysia

Apart from teaching students English, our presence at ICC Pahang is also to accompany students from three Muhammadiyah Universities who carry out international community service. The project team planned several activities for students, both academic and non-academic. The project team teaches students Mathematics, English, Science, Islam, and Arts for academic activities. Meanwhile, for non-academic activities, the team carries out activities that support students’ soft skills, such as building leadership and cooperation. In mid-August 2023, the team created activities that instilled a sense of nationalism in students by holding competitions to commemorate Indonesian Independence Day, August 17. The activity documentation is presented in Figure 5.

![Figure 5](image2.jpg)

**Figure 5.** Assistance from KKN-DIK Students from Three Muhammadiyah Universities to Create Activities to Commemorate Indonesian Independence Day, 17 August
After the activity, the project team also held an alumni meeting with one of the UMM alumni who had lived in Pahang Kuantan for many years. The possibility of sending children and their families to study at the University of Muhammadiyah Malang was discussed to accelerate the international accreditation milestone. Malaysian families can also feel several achievements achieved by Muhammadiyah universities in general. The activity documentation is presented in Figure 6.

Discussion

It is important to base the design of English teaching materials on the findings of a thorough analysis of the school's needs and situation. To implement the Independent Curriculum, teachers are strongly advised to start by preparing lesson plans, learning materials, and teaching materials. Learning materials combine themes and subjects such as science, social studies, mathematics, physical education, and Islamic-based content (Farah & Khoiriyah, 2023; Khoiriyah et al., 2022; Setyaningrum & Khoiriyah, 2022). Teachers utilize online resources such as videos, images, and ready-made materials to aid their teaching. By working together, content subject teachers and language teachers can successfully implement the Independent Curriculum in the classroom (Miranda et al., 2021; Mukhlishina et al., 2023). This will result in students mastering the content material and English.

In this study, the results showed that the use of e-books in teaching English was responded positively by teachers and students. This is supported by research that states that e-books integrated with game-based learning can increase the vocabulary of young learners (Firgiawan et al., 2024; Zulqarnain et al., 2023). Another reason that makes this research successful is that e-books can provide metacognitive guidance so that students are facilitated in their learning and are also effective in encouraging students to take on challenges, underlining that the use of e-books with locally based content is important to accommodate the needs of students at the elementary school level (Abdi et al., 2023; Rezkiana et al., 2023). Teachers have successfully created materials appropriate to local culture by considering students' needs. Therefore, student involvement and understanding can increase. The research’s advantages are: First, it contributes to community service. This research makes a real contribution to community service by meeting the needs of partner schools through the English teaching assistant program. This shows that this research does not only focus on academics but also on practical applications to improve the quality of education in society.

Second, the program that is the focus of research has been proven to be effective. This can be proven by research results showing that the English teaching assistant program was implemented effectively, showing the project team’s success in designing and implementing the program. This can be an example of similar programs that must be adopted and implemented elsewhere. Third, this research received positive responses from teachers and school coordinators who highlighted the success of this program in providing benefits to partner schools. This shows that the English teaching assistant program is considered effective and relevant by key stakeholders in education. Fourth, in terms of suitability to school needs. This program successfully met the needs of partner schools, which shows that the program was designed and implemented considering the real needs of these schools. This indicates that this research does not only focus on theory but also on solving concrete problems in the educational context of the field. Fifth, in terms of successful program implementation. The project team’s success in implementing an English teaching assistant program in partner schools shows that the approach taken in this research can be an example of
efforts to implement similar programs in other schools or places with similar contexts. In this way, the intended program presented to the community can be implemented effectively and is expected to continue in future partnerships.

However, the research has several areas for improvement, namely, the limited scope. This research only focuses on one school or several specific schools, so the generalization of the results to the elementary school population as a whole may be limited. Therefore, future research can be conducted over several school years to understand better the long-term impact of the English teaching assistant program.

4. CONCLUSION

By accompanying the teaching and learning process of the English language program and providing ready-to-use teaching materials according to school needs and the applicable curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka), this community service highlights that the program was received positively by the partner schools of Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur (SIKL), especially in Learning Center Permai, Penang and Indonesia Community Center (ICC) in Pahang Kuantan. The relevant stakeholders confirmed this positive statement. Furthermore, partner school teachers are expected to improve teaching and learning outcomes by providing ready-to-use teaching materials and a series of teaching assistants, especially in integrating English and content learning. Lastly, this community service also opens up wider opportunities to collaborate to improve the quality of learning at the Kuala Lumpur Indonesian School (SIKL).

5. REFERENCES


