

Parents' Attention on Students' English Learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic Era in Muhammadiyah Elementary Schools in Yogyakarta

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Abstract

Online learning in the Covid-19 pandemic era has been running for almost two years. Students are spending their time mostly at home, and parents have taken over more tasks as teachers for their children, including English learning. This study aims to investigate the kinds of parents' attention on students' English online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic era and their influence on the students' discipline during learning at home. A case study research design was employed. The respondents were the parents of fourth-grade students in SD Muhammadiyah Karangwaru, Yogyakarta. The data were collected through deep online interviews, online class observation, and field notes. Then, the data were analyzed by using the descriptive qualitative method that includes data collection, data display, data reduction, and conclusion (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). The results show that there were four kinds of attention given by parents to the students while having English online learning, namely: 1) giving full affection to students, 2) guiding and assisting students in learning, 3) giving rewards for motivation, and 4) fulfilling students' learning facilities. Meanwhile, the attention created good discipline for the students, i.e., writing new English vocabularies, completing and submitting assignments, and sharing time to study and to play.

Keywords: *parents, attention, English learning, pandemic era*

INTRODUCTION

An educational environment is needed to support a good learning process for children. It may include family, school, and community. Family is one of the important components in childhood education and one of the crucial elements to achieve educational goals. It is considered to be a pleasant and comfortable environment for children learning to get better results (Arigusman, 2017). Moreover, the role of the family has become more significant since the last two years of the Covid-19 pandemic era in which schools were closed to anticipate the spread of the Covid-19. Del Bono (2016) mentioned that the interaction of parents with students is very important for students' self-development. The amount of time that parents spend, such as reading a book for them or helping student's homework, is positively related to students' behavior, school grades, and cognitive skill development. Parents' attention to learning can be

demonstrated by various kinds of action. They are giving rewards or praises, giving punishment (penalty), providing guidance, and assisting students in difficulties.

In order that the learning process keeps running well in the pandemic era, face-to-face learning was replaced with online learning or blended learning. Online learning is still considered as a breakthrough or new paradigm in teaching and learning activities where teachers and learners have been very comfortable with offline learning. Basilaia & Kvavadze (2020) mentions that online learning is the experience of knowledge transfer using video, audio, images, text communication, and software supported by internet networks (Zhu & Liu, 2020). All technologies in online teaching and learning processes are done virtually at the same time. A teacher teaches in front of a computer or handphone in one place, while students follow the lesson from other digital electronics in different places. Since it is relatively new and shocking for them, obstacles are everywhere. Teachers got difficulties controlling students during online learning so that many students were difficult to understand materials given by teachers. Many parents also got serious problems. Some complained about the cost of the internet connection and time availability to accompany their children's learning. They had to find ways to monitor, guide, and assist their children in learning.

Teaching English to young learners can be beneficial or detrimental to learners so, the primary aim of teaching English in the early years of schooling is to motivate young learners to be ready and have self-confidence in learning English at higher levels of education. Prayatni (2019) stated that there is some importance in teaching English to young learners. The earlier the onset of foreign language learning is, the greater the chances for language proficiency are. Then, the learners have a great opportunity to have native-like pronunciation, improve overall school performance, have superior problem-solving skills, develop lifelong ability to communicate with more people, and understand other cultures better.

English subject is still available in the curriculum of Elementary Schools of Muhammadiyah in Yogyakarta as local content, and the learning process also becomes online during the pandemic era. However, students must be given more opportunities to learn English successfully. English teachers have been trying hard to run English classes well. They had their class either synchronously or asynchronously. Materials were designed simply and delivered to the students

carefully in order that they could understand. However, teachers cannot stand alone. Parents may also replace English teachers' roles in the online class. They can help children be successful in learning English because the process and the attainment in language learning are also influenced by the personal traits, skills, and aptitude of each learner. Discipline learning becomes an important part to reach such kind of condition. Discipline is obedience to rules related to learning problems with the self-awareness to follow the rules that have been applied in certain environments. A learning environment that applies discipline will produce outstanding students. Because students who excel are born from habits in obeying the rules that apply at school, so they can make success in learning (Tu'u, 2004).

Some researches on the roles of parents in the process of children's English learning have been done. Lestari (2020) studied the role of parental attention in the students' English learning motivation and achievement in MTsN 6 East Jakarta. She found that parents' attention brought a great influence on the students' learning motivation and achievement. Then, Kumalasari (2020) focused on the role of parents in shaping the home learning environment (HLE) for early childhood. The result of her research showed that parents need to learn about age-appropriate preschool behavior, discipline strategies, relevant game, materials, and readiness for activity. Meanwhile, Imbogo and Flora (2018) researched the role of parents in enhancing discipline among students in public day secondary schools. They stated that stakeholders must play their roles, especially in day secondary school along with the teachers to enhance discipline among students.

From the three researches, they agreed that parents played a great role in the students' learning process. They were focusing on the parents' role for the students' learning where all class activities were done normally and, automatically, the teachers' roles were more dominant. Meanwhile, the current research investigated the parents' attention to the students' learning in the pandemic era in which teachers' role was less than that of parents. Therefore, the goals of this research were to investigate how parents give attention to students' English online learning and the attention reflects on the students' discipline in the English online learning.

Hopefully, the results of this study may contribute to the efforts of keeping the quality of the English learning process and achievement by enhancing the role of parents to help their children learn successfully during the pandemic era of Covid-19. Next, this research may also create good collaboration between schools and parents where synergy among them is needed for such kind of condition.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a case study research design. Case study research is an empirical investigation of contemporary phenomena in real-life contexts (Yin, 2018). The case was investigated in SD Muhammadiyah Karangwaru, Yogyakarta from 19 to 28 of April 2021. The respondents of this research were the parents of the 26 students of grade four. The data were collected through having online interviews with the parents, observing the online class, and documenting the students' results in English tasks or tests. In analysing the data, the researcher employed the techniques of analysing qualitative data proposed by Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2014) that include reducing collected data, displaying accepted data, and having a conclusion or verification.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis, there are four kinds of attention given by parents to the students during online learning. They are discussed in more detail in the following parts.

1. Giving full affection to children

During learning at home, many parents thought the assignments given by the English teacher were too many and difficult, but most parents also felt happy, for they had more time giving attention to the children. Through learning at home, the parents could strengthen their relationship with their children. They gave more affection in which before the pandemic era, teachers replaced parents to give maximum attention to the students' education. Most parents agreed that online learning gave more opportunities to them to give attention to their children's

learning. Without full affection, students would have problems during the learning process. Below is the script of the interview with the respondent.

- (1) Peran perhatian orangtua adalah saat orangtua bisa mencurahkan kasih sayang penuh terhadap anak, serta mendidik anak supaya menjadi pribadi yang berguna.

(The role of parental attention is when parents can devote full affection to children, and educate children to become useful individuals)

Because parental affection plays an important role for students, parents gave their time to accompany their children while they were studying in the online model. Giving affection here means that parents tried to listen to all children's complaints and to help them in understanding materials from the English teacher. This condition created a good learning atmosphere for students so that they were not stressed while having online English learning. Ofoghi, Sadeghi, & Babei (2016), learning atmosphere influences the quality of learning. Therefore, students felt enjoyed in the online class as seen during the observation process.

2. Guiding and supervising children in learning

Nowadays, parents can substitute teachers in schools to give guidance and supervision in English online learning. Students who get good guidance and supervision from their parents will be more successful in their learning. Inadequate parental guidance makes students disappointed and frustrated. Meanwhile, supervision here means the process of controlling all students' activities either directly or indirectly. The respondents agreed that always guide and supervise all online learning activities. Here is the statement showing how parents positioned themselves as teachers at home.

- (2) Saya memberikan semangat penuh untuk anak saya supaya tetap semangat walaupun belajar dirumah. serta harus bisa menjadi guru di rumah yg baik bagi anak”.

(I give full enthusiasm for children to stay enthusiastic even though they are studying at home, and be a good teacher at home for children).

From the above statement, parents kept the spirit of learning at home by

playing their roles as good teachers. Good teachers will always dedicate themselves to students' love and sincerity. Their guidance and supervision in English learning made the students more motivated and more active in learning English and able to solve problems encountered (Subakthiasih & Putri, 2020). During the online class session, students were also encouraged to learn English with their teacher and participated actively.

3. Giving rewards for motivation

One serious problem during online learning is the decrease of the students' motivation. Therefore, learning English will be more interesting when teachers and parents present appreciation by giving rewards or praises during the learning process. Giving rewards and praises to students can make it easier for teachers and parents to increase students' learning motivation and achieve the learning goals (Cahya, Kusnadi, & Anggraeni, 2018). Moreover, students become more confident and responsible with the tasks given. Besides, parents have also to give alerts to students who are absent to do their learning tasks or assignments given by their teachers. These had been done by parents as mentioned in the statement below.

- (3) Kita perlu memberikan peringatan apabila anak mengabaikan tugasnya untuk belajar, dan memberikan apresiasi apabila anak bisa menunjukkan kemampuan dan hasil belajar yang bagus”.

(We need to give alerts if children neglect their study, and give appreciation if the child can show the ability and good learning outcomes.)

From the above statement, parents always give continuous warnings to students to do all assignments from the English teacher. However, the most important thing was giving appreciation. Parents gave rewards or praises to their children after showing their good learning results. These functions increase their motivation to learn and can build a positive relationship between parents and students. Parents gave rewards or praises when students could mention new English vocabularies, practice simple English conversations, get good scores for their English tasks or assignments. Giving rewards or praises showed how parents

respected and appreciated every single effort of the students.

4. Fulfilling the learning facilities

Online classes must be supported by appropriate and complete facilities so that they can run well. Smartphones or computers with internet data are needed by students for having a connection with their teachers through G-meet, google classroom, zoom, or other learning platforms (Ariastuti, Santosa, & Mahendrayana, 2021). Besides, students also need a good learning atmosphere at home, so a special room for online learning can be prepared. The efforts of providing such kinds of facilities can be seen in the following statements.

- (4) Mempersiapkan bahan belajar yang diperlukan, dan tempat khusus untuk anak yang menurut nya sudah nyaman, serta memberikan khursus Bahasa Inggris.

(My attention is preparing the study materials needed and a place for learning which I think comfortable, and giving him an English course.)

- (5) Saya menyiapkan perangkat seperti gadget khusus buat sekolah dan mendampingi nya belajar.

(I prepare some learning devices such as special gadgets for school and accompany them to study.)

The parents prepared everything to support the students' online classes. They prepared facilities like gadgets or computers supported by the internet connection because the students' English teacher conducted the online classes with different online learning platforms. Sometimes the teacher had synchronous classes through the goggle meet or zoom, and on another occasion, the teacher had the classes asynchronously like WA group or google classroom. Besides, parents also created a comfortable atmosphere at home as the main key to effective learning. Therefore, the first thing to do was to ensure that the home condition was not noisy and crowded. As the result, during the online English learning, students were focus and gave attention to the teacher's explanation.

Next, parents' attention brought positive impacts to the students, that is, the discipline in online English learning. The discipline included (1) writing new

vocabularies on their notebooks, (2) being punctual to do and submit school assignments, and (3) sharing time to study and play with friends.

1. Writing new vocabularies on their notebooks

A common problem in learning English is memorizing new vocabularies and using them for daily communication (Rahayu & Rosa, 2020). Most of the students are failed to remember new words when the teacher asks them to write them on paper. Therefore, parents may also embed discipline on students to get more vocabulary independently. Young learners still have more space to memorize more words. Parents' attention to English learning has created a new habit in building new words.

(6) Kalau ada kosakata baru saya suruh anak untuk menulis ulang di buku tulis beserta artinya.

(If there is a new vocabulary, I ask the child to rewrite it in the notebook and its meaning.)

The above statement shows parents may help students improve their English vocabularies through their discipline in writing all new words they get from their English teacher. Parents can remind students to write on a notebook or paper as done by the respondent above to her child. Written vocabularies will make it easier for the students to use them again either in spoken or written language. They need not find the words in the dictionary when they have got them in their notebook, so they can communicate in English well.

2. Being punctual to do and submit school assignments

Tasks and assignments become parts of learning activities that are carried out either inside or outside of school hours. Students must be disciplined to complete and submit all assignments given by the English teacher. In online learning, the English teacher gave a fairly long time to students to finish and submit the assignments. All submitted tasks will be used by the teacher to evaluate the students' English achievement. Hence, parents must always remind their children to finish and submit the tasks as stated by the respondent below.

(7) Sebisa mungkin selalu mengumpulkan tugas sebelum batas waktu

pengumpulannya.

(I push my child to always submit assignments before the deadline.)

Besides a part of the evaluation, the purpose of giving assignments is usually to strengthen the learners' understanding after the learning process. Given assignments foster a sense of school responsibility to students. For students, successful learning is shown when they can complete and submit the assignments (Efriana, 2021). This is not only a matter of academic purposes but also the representation of their attitude. Therefore, parents must remind students in doing assignments from the teacher in order not to be late.

3. Sharing time to study and play with friends

Online learning has given the students a lot of time at home, and parents have to be strict to make students keep discipline in sharing their time. When school hours in the morning, students must be focused on their online learning and do all tasks given by the teacher (Batbataar & Amin, 2021). After school hours, students may use the time for taking a rest or playing with their friends. One of the respondents made a written schedule to make sure students were disciplined in time as presented in the statement below.

(8) Disiplin yang baik adalah disiplin untuk konsisten dan bertanggung jawab dalam menerapkan waktu belajar yang dibuat.

(A good discipline is a discipline to be consistent and responsible in applying the study time that has been made.)

Many parents made a schedule for students while studying English from home. They combined the schedule from the school with the students' daily activities at home, for example, getting up regularly in the morning, taking a shower, having breakfast, studying until the appointed time, taking a rest, and playing with friends. Surely, the schedule must be flexible so that the students are not only disciplined but also happy in their online English classes.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion in the previous part, online English learning needs the parents' active participation by giving maximum attention

to the students while they are at home. There are several kinds of attention given by parents to students like giving full affection to children, guiding and supervising children in learning, giving rewards for motivation, and fulfilling the learning facilities. Good attention from parents brings good impacts to the students' discipline in learning English. Students were disciplined to write new words to improve their vocabulary mastery, they also committed to complete and submit the assignments given by their English teacher, and finally, they obeyed the schedules made by the school and parents.

From this research, a recommendation is given to some parties. For the parents, they must always improve their role for the successful learning of their children either in the pandemic or in the new normal era. Positive attention will bring positive results for the students to learn English. Next, for the school and teachers, they have to build a good relationship with the parents. All learning problems in the online classes must be communicated. Last, the government has to give real aids to make schools and parents easier to run online learning.

Finally, further researches are needed to follow up the findings of this research, especially in the level of collaboration between teachers and students for the success of online English learning. They may also study the influence of the parents' attention on the students' English learning achievement.

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