

Christiyanti Abel

KEM
INDONESIA

ENGLISH for YOUNG LEARNERS

Theory, Strategies, and
Classroom Practices



English

for Young Learners

Theory, Strategies, and Classroom Practices

Christiyanti Abel



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ENGLISH FOR YOUNG LEARNERS

Theory, Strategies, and Classroom Practices

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PREFACE

Teaching English to young learners is both a challenging and rewarding endeavour. Young learners are curious, imaginative, and highly responsive to engaging and meaningful learning experiences. Recognizing the unique needs of children, this book, *English for Young Learners: Theory, Strategies, and Classroom Practices*, aims to provide a comprehensive guide for pre-service teachers, teacher trainees, and educators who wish to develop effective English language teaching skills for children.

This book integrates foundational theories of language acquisition, child development, and pedagogical approaches with practical strategies for the classroom. Covering topics such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as well as the use of songs, games, storytelling, and digital media, each chapter combines theory with examples of classroom practices to enhance understanding and application.

Designed in alignment with Outcome-Based Education (OBE) principles and Course Learning Outcomes (CPL–CPMK), this textbook emphasizes reflective teaching, microteaching practice, and authentic assessment. It is intended as a resource to inspire creativity, foster learner-centered instruction, and equip future



teachers with the confidence and competence to teach English effectively to young learners.

The authors hope that this book will serve as both a practical guide and a source of inspiration for all those committed to nurturing the next generation of English language learners.

Larantuka, January, 3, 2026

Christiyanti Abel



CONTENTS

Chapter

01

Chapter

02

Chapter

03

PREFACE..... i

CONTENTS.....iii

INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH FOR YOUNG

LEARNERS (EYL) 1

1.1. Definition and Scope of EYL.....1

1.2. Importance of Early English Learning 4

1.3. EYL in Global and Indonesian Contexts 6

CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUNG LEARNERS 9

2.1. Cognitive, Social, and Emotional
Development 9

2.2. Learning Styles and Multiple
Intelligences.....12

2.3. Implications for Teaching English 14

THEORIES OF LANGUAGE ACQUISITION 19

3.1. Behaviorism, Nativism, and
Interactionism.....19

3.2. Krashen's Second Language Acquisition
Theory.....22

3.3. Pedagogical Implications for EYL 25



Chapter
04

CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING.....29

- 4.1. Piaget and Vygotsky's Perspectives 29
- 4.2. Affective Factors in Language Learning ...32
- 4.3. Child-Centered Learning Principles 35

Chapter
05

CURRICULUM AND SYLLABUS DESIGN FOR EYL 39

- 5.1. EYL Curriculum Frameworks 39
- 5.2. Competency-Based and Thematic
Syllabus.....42
- 5.3. Lesson Planning Principles.....45

Chapter
06

TEACHING LISTENING TO YOUNG LEARNERS 49

- 6.1. Listening Skills Development 49
- 6.2. Total Physical Response (TPR).....52
- 6.3. Classroom Listening Activities 55

Chapter
07

TEACHING SPEAKING TO YOUNG LEARNERS 61

- 7.1. Pronunciation and Classroom Language .61
- 7.2. Dialogues, Chants, and Role Play.....64
- 7.3. Encouraging Confidence in Speaking.....66

Chapter
08

**TEACHING VOCABULARY AND GRAMMAR IN
CONTEXT.....71**

- 8.1. Vocabulary Acquisition Strategies 71
- 8.2. Implicit Grammar Teaching.....74
- 8.3. Use of Realia and Visual Media 76

Chapter
09

**TEACHING READING AND WRITING FOR YOUNG
LEARNERS 81**

- 9.1. Early Literacy and Phonics 81
- 9.2. Reading Readiness and Shared Reading..84
- 9.3. Emergent Writing Activities.....87



Chapter
10

SONGS, GAMES, AND PLAY-BASED LEARNING 91

- 10.1. Educational Value of Songs and Games...91
- 10.2. Designing Play-Based Language
Activities 94
- 10.3. Managing Playful Classrooms 97

Chapter
11

STORYTELLING AND CHILDREN’S LITERATURE 101

- 11.1. Storytelling Techniques 101
- 11.2. Picture Books and Big Books 104
- 11.3. Follow-Up Language Activities.....106

Chapter
12

MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY IN EYL.....111

- 12.1. Traditional and Digital Learning Media..111
- 12.2. Safe and Effective Technology Use 113
- 12.3. Digital Resources for Young Learners 116

Chapter
13

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND ASSESSMENT 119

- 13.1. Managing Young Learner Classrooms....119
- 13.2. Positive Discipline and Motivation 122
- 13.3. Authentic Assessment in EYL.....124

Chapter
14

MICROTEACHING AND PROFESSIONAL

REFLECTION.....129

- 14.1. Lesson Plan Implementation 129
- 14.2. Microteaching Practice.....132
- 14.3. Reflective Teaching and Professional
Growth.....134

REFERENCES 137

ATTACHEMENT 143

AUTHOR.....149





Chapter ”

01.

INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH FOR YOUNG LEARNERS (EYL)

1.1. Definition and Scope of EYL

English for Young Learners (EYL) refers to the teaching and learning of the English language by children during their early formal education years. In the context of language education, young learners are typically defined as children who begin formal schooling and continue up to the end of primary education. According to Nunan, young learners include children from approximately **3 to 15 years old**, with many researchers focusing specifically on the primary school age range of **6 to 12 years old**. Etheses UIN Syekh Wasil Kediri+1

From the perspective of language teaching pedagogy, **EYL is not simply about teaching language forms**, but involves creating a **child-centered learning environment** that takes into account children's cognitive, emotional, and social development. Unlike adolescent or adult learners, young learners are still developing



basic concepts of literacy, abstract thinking, and classroom behaviour, making the design of instruction and materials a unique task. [Open Access Repository](#)

Definition of EYL

A commonly accepted working definition in language education is: **English for Young Learners (EYL)** refers to the teaching of English to children who are in the early stages of formal schooling (usually around **ages 6–12**), in ways that are **developmentally appropriate**, **communicative**, and **engaging**. It emphasizes language use in meaningful contexts, rather than isolated grammar or vocabulary drills, and is supported by activities such as songs, games, storytelling, and play-based tasks. [Open Access Repository](#)

This definition highlights several important elements:

- 1) **Young learner focus:** Learners are children whose psychological and linguistic development differs from adults.
- 2) **Developmental appropriateness:** Instruction should suit children's learning needs, including attention span, interests, and motivation.
- 3) **Meaningful communication:** Emphasis on real communication skills — listening, speaking, reading, and writing — in contexts familiar to children.
- 4) **Engaging methods:** Use of playful and interactive methods to enhance motivation and reduce affective filters. [Open Access Repository](#)



Scope of EYL

The *scope* of EYL includes the following key areas:

- 1) **Learner Characteristics and Needs.** Understanding how children think, communicate, and respond to learning tasks. Young learners learn differently — they learn language through *interaction, play, and meaningful use* rather than formal analysis. Etheses UIN Syekh Wasil Kediri
- 2) **Curriculum and Materials Design.** Designing syllabi, lesson plans, and materials that are age-appropriate, theme-based, and linked to children’s real-life experiences. The scope includes integrating language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) into cohesive units. UPI Repository
- 3) **Teaching Methodologies.** Several communicative and child-friendly methodologies are used in EYL, such as Total Physical Response (TPR), songs and chants, story-based learning, and games. These approaches support *natural language acquisition* rather than rote memorization. Open Access Repository
- 4) **Assessment Practices.** Assessment in EYL focuses on authentic and formative evaluation — observing children’s performance in communicative tasks, portfolios, and performance-based measures, rather than traditional written tests. Open Access Repository
- 5) **Classroom Environment and Interaction.** A supportive, low-anxiety, and stimulating classroom environment enhances children’s willingness to communicate in English. Teachers play a crucial role as facilitators and language models. Etheses UIN Syekh Wasil Kediri



1.2. Importance of Early English Learning

Early English learning plays a crucial role in shaping children's linguistic, cognitive, and socio-cultural development. Introducing English at an early age provides learners with a strong foundation for future language proficiency and helps them develop positive attitudes toward foreign language learning.

From a linguistic perspective, young children possess a high level of **neuroplasticity**, which enables them to acquire sounds, intonation, and basic structures of a new language more naturally than older learners. Research in second language acquisition suggests that children who are exposed to a foreign language early tend to develop **better pronunciation and listening skills**, as they are more sensitive to phonological differences (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

Early English learning is also important because it supports **natural language acquisition** rather than conscious language learning. According to Krashen's theory, young learners acquire language most effectively when they receive **comprehensible input** in low-anxiety, meaningful contexts. Songs, stories, games, and daily classroom interactions allow children to acquire English implicitly, without pressure to master grammatical rules explicitly (Krashen, 1985).

In addition, learning English at an early age contributes significantly to **children's cognitive development**. Studies show that early foreign language learning enhances memory, problem-solving skills, and mental flexibility. Bilingual or multilingual children often demonstrate greater metalinguistic awareness, which helps them understand how language works in general (Cameron, 2001).



From an educational perspective, early English learning prepares children for **future academic demands**. As English functions as a global language in education, science, technology, and communication, early exposure enables learners to develop confidence and familiarity with the language. This early familiarity reduces learning anxiety at higher levels of education and promotes lifelong learning attitudes (Pinter, 2017).

Furthermore, early English learning has a strong **social and cultural dimension**. Through English, children are introduced to different cultures, values, and ways of communication. This exposure fosters openness, tolerance, and intercultural awareness from an early age, which is essential in an increasingly globalized world (UNESCO, 2015).

In the Indonesian context, including in regions such as East Nusa Tenggara, early English learning is particularly important to ensure **educational equity and competitiveness**. When English is introduced through child-friendly, contextualized, and culturally sensitive approaches, it empowers young learners without threatening local languages or identities. Teachers, therefore, play a key role in balancing global language skills with local cultural values.

In conclusion, the importance of early English learning lies not only in linguistic achievement but also in its contribution to children's cognitive growth, academic readiness, and global citizenship. For prospective teachers at IKTL, understanding this importance is essential to designing meaningful, joyful, and developmentally appropriate English learning experiences for young learners.



1.3. EYL in Global and Indonesian Contexts

English for Young Learners (EYL) has become a significant component of language education worldwide due to the growing role of English as a **global lingua franca**. In many countries, English is introduced at the primary or even pre-primary level to prepare children for participation in global communication, education, and the workforce. The global spread of English has influenced national education policies, curriculum design, and teacher education programs, including those for young learners.

EYL in the Global Context

Globally, the teaching of English to young learners is driven by the belief that **early exposure leads to long-term language benefits**. Many countries in Europe, Asia, and Latin America have incorporated English into their primary school curricula as a compulsory or elective subject. According to Pinter (2017), early English instruction worldwide emphasizes **communicative competence**, learner engagement, and age-appropriate pedagogy rather than grammatical accuracy alone.

International organizations such as UNESCO and the British Council advocate for early language learning that supports not only linguistic skills but also **intercultural understanding and global citizenship**. English learning at an early age is seen as a tool for fostering openness to cultural diversity and preparing learners to interact in multicultural settings (UNESCO, 2015).

However, global research also highlights challenges in EYL implementation, including shortages of qualified teachers, inappropriate teaching methods, and overemphasis on testing. Consequently, international best practices stress the importance of



well-trained teachers, child-centered methodologies, and meaningful assessment (Cameron, 2001).

EYL in the Indonesian Context

In Indonesia, the position of English in early education has evolved over time. English is classified as a **foreign language**, not a second language, and its introduction at the primary level has been influenced by national curriculum policies. While English is no longer a compulsory subject in the national primary school curriculum, many schools—especially private and urban schools—continue to offer English as a **local content subject (muatan lokal)** or extracurricular activity.

Research indicates that English learning in Indonesia faces specific contextual challenges, such as large class sizes, limited instructional time, and varying levels of teacher competence in EYL pedagogy. Nonetheless, studies also show that Indonesian children display high motivation and positive attitudes toward learning English when instruction is delivered through **songs, games, and storytelling** (Suyanto, 2007).

In regions such as East Nusa Tenggara, including Flores and surrounding areas, EYL plays a strategic role in enhancing **educational access and future opportunities**. Contextualized English instruction that respects local culture and multilingual realities—where children may already speak local languages and Indonesian—can support both language development and cultural identity. Therefore, English should be introduced as an **additional language**, not as a replacement for local or national languages.

Implications for Teacher Education at IKTL

For teacher education institutions such as IKTL, understanding EYL in both global and Indonesian contexts is



essential. Prospective teachers must be equipped not only with global perspectives on best practices in EYL but also with the ability to **adapt teaching strategies to local needs and realities**. This includes selecting culturally relevant materials, using local stories and songs, and creating meaningful learning experiences despite limited resources.

In summary, EYL globally emphasizes communicative, child-centered, and interculturally aware language education, while in the Indonesian context, it requires flexible, contextualized, and culturally sensitive implementation. Teachers trained at IKTL are expected to bridge these global and local perspectives to deliver effective and responsible English instruction for young learners.



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ATTACHEMENT

A. OBE ALIGNMENT: CPL – CPMK

Program Learning Outcomes (CPL) – Example

Graduates are able to:

1. Apply theories of English language teaching appropriately
2. Design creative and child-centered learning activities
3. Implement and evaluate English learning for young learners

Course Learning Outcomes (CPMK)

Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Explain theories and characteristics of young learners
2. Design English lessons suitable for young learners
3. Implement effective teaching strategies and media for EYL
4. Apply appropriate assessment techniques in EYL

B. CPMK Mapping

CPMK	Learning Focus
CPMK 1	Theories and learner characteristics
CPMK 2	Lesson planning and materials
CPMK 3	Teaching strategies and media
CPMK 4	Assessment and reflection

C. Sample RPS / Course Outline (2 Credits)



Course : English for Young Learners: Theory, Strategies, and Classroom Practices

Credits : 2

Learning Approach : Outcome-Based Education, Student-Centered Learning

Teacher : Christiyanti Abel, S.S., M.Pd.

D. Weekly Learning Plan: CPMK – Course Learning Outcome

Week	Topic	CPMK	Learning Activities	Assessment / Kriteria Penilaian
1	Introduction to EYL	Explain scope, definition, and importance of EYL	Lecture, discussion	Quiz (10%), criteria: accuracy & clarity of answers
2	Child Development & Learning Styles	Analyze cognitive, social, emotional development of children	Case study, group discussion	Observation (5%), criteria: participation & insight
3	Language Acquisition Theories	Compare behaviorism, nativism, interactionism, Krashen	Lecture, role play	Written assignment (10%), criteria: completeness & conceptual understanding
4	Play-Based Learning	Apply play-based strategies	Demonstration, micro-activity	Peer observation (5%), criteria: creativity & relevance



Week	Topic	CPMK	Learning Activities	Assessment / Kriteria Penilaian
5	Curriculum & Lesson Planning	Design thematic & competency-based lesson plans	Workshop, group activity	Lesson plan submission (10%), criteria: structure, alignment with CPL & CPMK
6	Listening Skills	Implement listening activities (TPR, story listening)	Games, TPR activity	Observation checklist (5%), criteria: accuracy of responses & engagement
7	Speaking Skills	Encourage oral interaction using dialogues, role play	Mini teaching, chants	Rubric-based peer feedback (10%), criteria: pronunciation, fluency, engagement
8	Vocabulary & Grammar	Teach vocabulary and simple grammar implicitly	Flashcards, games	Quiz / Worksheet (10%), criteria: correctness & creativity
9	Reading Skills	Early literacy: reading readiness & shared reading	Story reading, picture books	Worksheet & observation (5%), criteria: participation & comprehension
10	Writing Skills	Emergent writing activities	Drawing & sentence writing	Assignment (5%), criteria: completeness & language accuracy



Week	Topic	CPMK	Learning Activities	Assessment / Kriteria Penilaian
11	Songs & Games	Integrate songs, rhymes, and play	Singing, acting, role play	Observation / Rubric (5%), criteria: participation, creativity, engagement
12	Storytelling	Use picture books, big books, and follow-up activities	Storytelling session	Peer & instructor feedback (5%), criteria: clarity, creativity, engagement
13	Learning Media & Technology	Use traditional and digital media	Hands-on activity	Assignment / Observation (5%), criteria: appropriateness & engagement
14	Classroom Management & Reflection	Apply positive discipline & reflective teaching	Simulation, reflection journal	Reflection paper / Rubric (10%), criteria: insightfulness & applicability

E. Assessment Criteria

Assessment Type	Bobot	Kriteria Penilaian
Quiz & Worksheet	25%	Accuracy, completeness, and clarity
Lesson Plan Submission	10%	Alignment with CPL, structure, clarity, creativity
Microteaching / Peer Observation	25%	Pronunciation, fluency, engagement, use of media



Assessment Type	Bobot	Kriteria Penilaian
Assignments (storytelling, emergent writing, media use)	15%	Correctness, creativity, applicability
Reflection Journal	10%	Insightfulness, reflection depth, actionable improvements
Participation & Attendance	15%	Active participation in discussions, teamwork, engagement
Total	100%	

F. Sample Student Worksheet

Worksheet: Designing a Song-Based Lesson

Instructions:

1. Choose an English children's song
2. Identify learning objectives
3. Design pre-, while-, and post-activities
4. Explain how the song supports language learning

Output: One-page lesson plan

G. Sample Assessment Rubric (Microteaching)

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Poor (1)
Content mastery	Very clear	Clear	Limited	Unclear
Teaching strategy	Creative & appropriate	Appropriate	Less suitable	Inappropriate
Media use	Very effective	Effective	Limited	None
Classroom language	Fluent	Adequate	Limited	Inaccurate

H. Teaching Notes (Lecturer Guidelines)

- 1) Emphasize **learning by doing**



- 2) Use **simulations and microteaching** regularly
- 3) Encourage reflection after teaching practice
- 4) Integrate **local culture** in songs and stories
- 5) Focus on **child-friendly and joyful learning**



AUTHOR



Christiyanti Abel

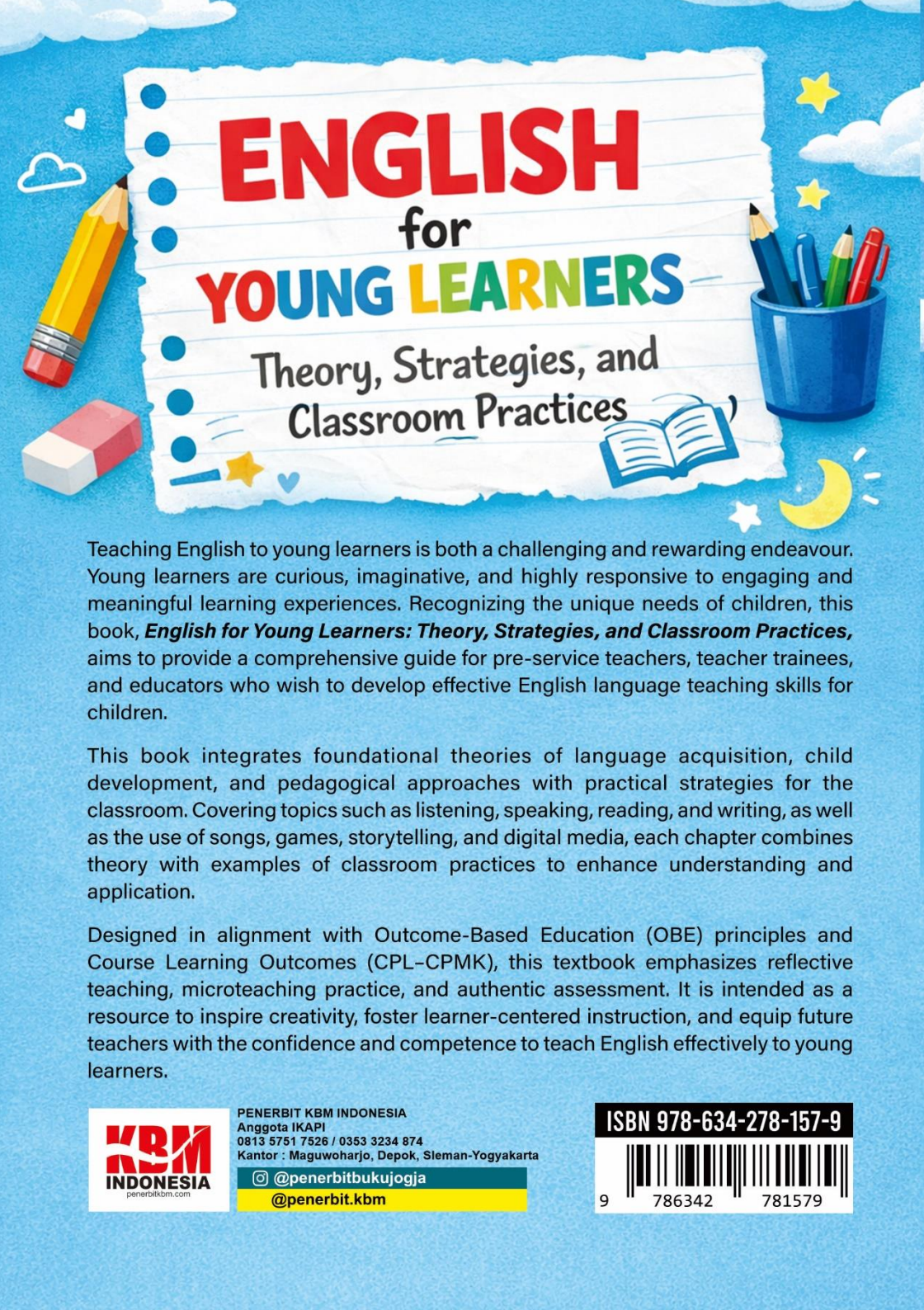
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Community to the King of Adonara," in *MICJO Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 4, December 2025 edition. Additionally, she contributed a community service article titled "Changing the Mindset of the Young Generation into Great Entrepreneurs in the Global Era (Entrepreneurship Training for Students and Teachers at Genova Vocational School, Pasir Putih, Nagawutung, Lembata, NTT)," published in *MICJO Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 2, April 2025 edition.





ENGLISH for YOUNG LEARNERS

Theory, Strategies, and Classroom Practices

Teaching English to young learners is both a challenging and rewarding endeavour. Young learners are curious, imaginative, and highly responsive to engaging and meaningful learning experiences. Recognizing the unique needs of children, this book, ***English for Young Learners: Theory, Strategies, and Classroom Practices***, aims to provide a comprehensive guide for pre-service teachers, teacher trainees, and educators who wish to develop effective English language teaching skills for children.

This book integrates foundational theories of language acquisition, child development, and pedagogical approaches with practical strategies for the classroom. Covering topics such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as well as the use of songs, games, storytelling, and digital media, each chapter combines theory with examples of classroom practices to enhance understanding and application.

Designed in alignment with Outcome-Based Education (OBE) principles and Course Learning Outcomes (CPL-CPMK), this textbook emphasizes reflective teaching, microteaching practice, and authentic assessment. It is intended as a resource to inspire creativity, foster learner-centered instruction, and equip future teachers with the confidence and competence to teach English effectively to young learners.

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