

## ENGLISH TRAINING USING BIRKENBIHL METHOD TO IMPROVE RECEPTIVE SKILLS OF GRADE VII STUDENTS AT MTS PUTRI AS'ADIYAH SENGKANG

Satriani<sup>1</sup>, Amiruddin<sup>2\*</sup>, Yusuf Razaq<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1, 2\*, 3</sup> Institut Agama Islam As'adiyah Sengkang, Sengkang, Indonesia

[amiruddinn1@gmail.com](mailto:amiruddinn1@gmail.com)

### Abstract

This program focuses on providing instruction to improve students' receptive abilities through exercises such as decoding text, reading aloud, and filling in the blank for listening using the Birkhenbihl approach during the SLA process. This English camp curriculum yielded four primary outcomes: 1) Male students are better at mastering vocabulary in decoding and active listening activities, 2) female students are better at comprehending the text, 3) age factors have a significant impact on the SLA process, and 4) internal motivation, which is influenced by the student's character, has an impact on the progress of receptive skill improvement. The English camp, which ran from September 7th to October 4th, 2020, was aimed to educate seventh-grade students at Junior High School how to use the Birkhenbihl technique to acquire and improve their English receptive abilities. 133 children, 12 homeroom teachers, 12 tutors, 12 students, 6 lecturers, and parents were influenced by this initiative. The key resource for reading aloud, decoding text, and listening activities is the Birkhenbihl method module. The daily portfolio is a daily portfolio, whereas the weekly portfolio is a weekly portfolio. Character-building exercises also include sunnah or amaliyah activities.

**Keywords:** English Training, Birkenbihl Method, Receptive Skills

### Introduction

Teaching and studying English in nations that utilize English as a foreign language or expanding circle countries like Indonesia is unquestionably difficult and necessitates a great deal of individual work on the part of both students and teachers (Marcellino, 2005; Muhayyang, Limbong, & Ariyani, 2021). This difficulty is exacerbated by the fact that Indonesia is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-lingual country, with the majority of the population speaking the Regional Language as their first language (L1) and Indonesian as a Second Language (L2), as well as Arabic and English, L3 (third) (Koentjaraningrat, 2009). Given that English teachers in Indonesia will undoubtedly face scenarios in multi-ethnic and linguistic classrooms, it is not surprising that English is also known as English as a lingua franca, and the multicultural education curriculum is frequently reiterated by experts, researchers, and practitioners (Erlenawati, 2002; Soler & Jorda, 2007; Saddhono, 2015; Suparsa, Mantra, Widiastuti, 2017; Firman, Mirnawati, & Aswar, 2021). As a result, it is very appreciated when the BNSP and the Language Agency define learning English objectives, and curriculum development must be founded on the premise of prioritizing Indonesian use before learning and mastering foreign languages.

Other forms of effort include the development of several English curriculums since the colonial era, which have changed more than ten times (Li, 1999; Mistar, 2005; Riadi, 2019), employing diverse adaptations of approaches, tactics, and procedures. From when they were still using the direct method in Dutch schools before independence, the grammar translation method and the audio-lingual method in the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s, the eclectic method in the late 1970s, to the communicative approach that has been used since the 1980s until now with several

\*Correspondent Author: [amiruddinn1@gmail.com](mailto:amiruddinn1@gmail.com)

integration methods in accordance with the learning needs, target needs, and environmental needs of students at the time (Iryanti & Madya, 2018).

One type of learning in English necessitates receptive skills, namely listening skills, which are a critical ability to acquire in learning English but are rarely taught to students by teachers, who prefer to focus on speaking, writing, and reading abilities. Furthermore, the public perception of a person's English competence is based on his speaking ability rather than his listening skills. In reality, listening is more harder to learn in English receptive skills. One of the causes of this problem is that teachers are unable to employ tactics that are tailored to the needs of their students, therefore they are less motivated to learn these abilities (Chamot, 2004; Adnan, 2012; Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008; Kung, 2019).

The Birkenbihl technique is a German foreign language learning approach for young learners who are in the process of acquiring a foreign language (Kirikova et al., 2014). Students are encouraged to study English as if it were their mother tongue in this manner (Indonesian). Learners are taught how to learn languages instinctively and with enjoyment. The Birkenbihl technique emphasizes pupils' ability to comprehend English without being forced to learn grammar or memorize vocabulary ((Kirikova et al., 2014). As a result, children are encouraged to listen actively as well as passively. Students engage in active listening when they listen to the audio of the English text they have studied while aware that they are in the listening phase of the learning process. While passive listening refers to kids hearing audio from English books on the sides of student activities such as when they play, rest, or go about their everyday routines while the audio is playing. So that students have heard it numerous times automatically (repetition), making it easier for them to assimilate the information presented. As a result, the goal of both active and passive hearing is repetition. 1) Decoding activities, 2) Active listening activities, 3) Passive listening activities, 4) Active reading activities, and active writing activities (Fleta, 2014; Wang, 2015; Peltola, Alku, & Peltola, 2017; Jia & Hew, 2010; Toyokawa et al., 2021), which include two activities, dictation activities and fill in the blank activities, are all part of the Birkenbihl technique.

Several English writers and teachers in various nations, both in the inner circle, outer circle, and expanding circle, have embraced this strategy for learning the language acquisition of children in primary and secondary schools, as well as beginner foreign language learners.

Based on these considerations, this year's English Camp activities for young learners must be completed online using the birkenbihl method, which has been agreed upon as a method that can be completed effectively with simple steps and can be completed by students independently with monitoring from tutors, homeroom teachers, parents, and assistant lecturers. Furthermore, during a pandemic that encompasses the entire academic community, practitioners, academics, and education stakeholders, a collaboration between schools and learning institutions, as well as campuses and the role of parents, is an important aspect of implementing the open learning curriculum. The researcher limits the discussion in this article to the effect of three Birkenbihl method activities (decoding text activities, read-aloud activities, and fill in the blank activities) on the receptive skills (reading and listening skills) of English students due to a large number of English Camp program activities.

### **Implementation Method**

The community service team splits the conversation into three parts in the implementation method section, namely the activity stage, implementation stage, and training assessment stage, and is separated into eight primary activity steps based on three phases. Activities from implementation to evaluation during the implementation phase.

1. Meeting learning objectives and mapping the jobdesk of the parties involved

2. BM training for all tutors & mentors
3. Preparation and distribution of modules, platforms, media, assessment and evaluation patterns
4. Opening Ceremony English Camp Virtual
5. Implementation of English Camp accompanied by tutors, assistants, and homeroom teachers
6. Daily and weekly evaluation
7. Recap and evaluate daily and weekly progress data
8. Report on the results of the implementation and closing ceremony

### 1. Activity Stage

The goal of this virtual English camp at MTs Putri As'adiyah Sengkang is to improve the receptive abilities of new class VII pupils. Figure 1 shows how the goal of this activity is divided into two indicators based on the type of English receptive skill used as a form of output.

Indicators of Birkenbhl (Decoding Text)
a. The students are able to understand and to use familiar everyday expression.
b. The students are able to understand and to use very basic phrases.
c. The students are able to introduce him/herself and others, added they are able to ask and answer about personal details where she or he lives.
d. The students are able to interact in a simple way provided the other person talks clearly.
Indicators of Reading Comprehension (Active and Passive Listening)
a. The students are able to recognize words in the text.
b. The students are able to process words in the text.
c. The students are able to construct meaning from the language of the written texts.
d. The students are able to find the lateral information in the text.
e. The students are able to find the inferential information in the text.
Indicators of Pronunciation (Reading Aloud)
a. The students are able to pronounce short vowels.
b. The students are able to pronounce long vowels.
c. The students are able to pronounce consonant sounds.
d. The students are able to pronounce diphthongs.
e. The students are able to pronounce fricatives.

**Figure 1.** Virtual English Camp Program Target Indicators

The major goal of this practice, as shown in Figure 1, is for new class VII participants to understand the sense of the text without focusing on grammar or the process of memorizing foreign vocabulary. The participants in this virtual English camp include a total of 133 new class VII students from MTs Putri As'adiyah Sengkang. There is one native speaker, six English education lecturers, twelve homeroom instructors, twelve student teachers, and twelve tutors from tutoring. In addition, the English Camp program has a core board that consists of two teachers as coordinators and secretaries, one lecturer who serves in two capacities as head of the implementation coordinator and assistant tutor, and one lecturer who serves in three capacities as secretary, who is in charge of the English camp program's assessment, and co-tutors.

## 2. Implementation Stage

This program lasted a month, from September 7th to October 4th, 2020. These materials are then turned into a series of activities that are tailored to the Birkenbihl method's learning training processes, which are grouped into six (6) key activities:

a. Decoding Activities

Students read English materials that aren't accompanied by a word-for-word Indonesian translation. Without the use of any equipment, students translate words from English into their mother tongue (Indonesian). Students read the English text, which includes a word-for-word translation. Students use different colors to color the words they know and the terms they don't know. Students read aloud the Indonesian translations of words. Because the structure of sentence patterns in Indonesian and English is different, this activity will sound funny. However, this is done to develop students' intuition so that they can translate grammar and vocabulary according to context without having to memorize them.

b. Active listening activities

While listening to the English audio script, students read the translation of the words. Students attempt to translate meaning from English to Indonesian as accurately as possible. When participants can understand the broad sense of the material without using word-for-word translation, they are said to have passed the active listening stage.

c. Passive listening activities

Students hear audio scripts from English literature they've studied while conducting everyday activities like sleeping, playing, and so on at this level. This step is completed to give students time to become more familiar with pronunciation and to hear words from the text that they have learned.

d. Active reading activities

Students read literature in English without having to translate them word for word. Without the aid of a word-for-word translation, pupils should be able to comprehend the information included in the text. The book is read aloud in English with proper pronunciation by the students.

e. Active speaking activities

Students say and listen to the audio script at the same time. The audio volume is increased in the first step, and students and their friends converse while the audio is playing.

f. Active writing activities

Students listen to audio scripts and then write down every sentence. Students can also compare the text he has written to the English version of the material. Students must match whether or not what is written is correct. Without looking at the English text, if something is still wrong. Students must listen to the audio script again and correctly rewrite each sentence. Furthermore, pupils are given text that has been examined, but some portions of the sentence have been deleted. The sentence is completed by the students.

## 3. Activity Evaluation Stage

Several core administrators were asked to construct an assessment form during the training evaluation stage. Multiple layers of evaluation are used in this type of material mastery assessment to refine decoding, listening, and reading skills.

## **Results and Discussion**

The results of decoding text, active listening text, and read aloud text exercises on receptive skills incorporated into SLA and student character building are discussed in this article. They are rated in the following order based on the recapitulation of values and averages for each aspect: 1) The aspect of decoding text activities is ranked first as the most controlled activity, with an average score of nearly 81; 2) The aspect of reading aloud activities is ranked second, with an average score of nearly 75; and 3) Aspects of passive and active listening activities are ranked third, with an average value of only 4 points different from reading aloud activities, which is 71,083.

These findings support academic research that suggests that listening is the most difficult activity to master (Chamot, 2004; Adnan, 2012; Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008; Kung, 2019), whereas decoding is the most favored and mastered skill by seventh-grade SMP students, who are the digital native generation in the era of digital literacy, because without a complete translation process with a series of processes such as tuning, analyzing, understanding, terminology, restructuring, and checking. Decoding skills, according to some researchers, are worldwide megatrends in upskilling and reskilling abilities that must be learned in the future for communication, helping to increase reading intelligence, and having a significant impact on future work (Alex & Petrina, 2017; Kovacs-Ondrejckovic et al., 2019; Kar, Kar, & Gupta, 2021).

If prepared early, the activity of decoding text on English words, which are the most commonly used worldwide languages for formal and non-formal communication in many countries, would undoubtedly have a good impact on the digital native generation's future. Furthermore, decoding text is very suitable if applied to the learning process with various digital learning tools to teach L2 or L3 vocabulary in the young learner phase, in accordance with the implementation of virtual English camp with various media such as google classroom, quizzes, Kahoot, google meet, zoom, and youtube (Wong & Samudra, 2019; Samudra, Wong, & Neuman, 2019; Stojan et al., 2021).

Meanwhile, from the achievement of progress scores every week for one month, if analyzed based on the increase in the average score of all 12 classes, A to F, male and female, are as follows: 1) In the text decoding activity, the progress of the increase in points increased by 2, up to 6.5 points with details [(Week 1 is 6,509 points more than KKM 70) (2 weeks: 3,786) (3 weeks: 1,913) (4th week: 2,706)]. 2) Inactive listening activities, the progress of the increase in points increased by 2 to 7 points [(1st week: 6,392 to KKM 70) (2nd week: 7,371) (3rd week: 2,183) (week-4): 3,423)]. 3) In the read-aloud activity, the progress of the increase in points increased by 1 to 5 points [(1st week: reached KKM 70 from a rounded result of 69,745) (2nd week: 5,032) (3rd week: 0.171) (4th week: 3,438)].

From the progress achieved, the comparison of the value recapitulation based on gender, male and female, in each aspect of the activity, is as follows: 1) Aspects of decoding activities from weeks 1-4: the average score of male students is 0.538 superior, with a range of excellence scores for each week (weeks 1-4 for male and female students, namely 0.833, 0.145, 0.722, and 0.445) even though both of them have more than 10-11 points more than the standard KKM score of 70. 2) Aspects of active listening activities from weeks 1-4 of the average score of male students are 1.331 superior to female students, even though both have more than KKM scores 70 and the range of excellence scores for each week (weeks 1-4 of male and female students are 1.344; 1.739; 1.425; and 0.819). 3) Aspects of reading aloud activities from weeks 1-4: The average score of male students is 1.516 better than female students, with a range of excellence each week (weeks 1-4 of male and female students: 2,062; 1,278; 1.619; and 1.102), even though both of them have reached the KKM value of 70 from the rounding results.

Based on these findings, it can be determined and analyzed that the overall average score of students is 80.98 (rounded up to 81), indicating that the average student only has 7 vocabularies, based on levels 1-12 (C1-A1), which is adjusted to the number of levels in the Common European

Framework Reference (CEFR), and that students are already at the advanced A1 level. The average score for boys and girls in the second to the fourth week increased by one level compared to the first week at the intermediate A1 level, with an average translation mistake of 14 words in text 1 and an average score for boys and girls in the range of 76-77.

Age, gender, social class, and ethnic identification are among the most relevant social elements in the effectiveness of mastering the language learning process when considered from the perspective of SLA or second or foreign language acquisition (Moyer, 2004; Duff & Talmy, 2011; Duff, 2013). Men are superior in vocabulary mastery, according to the data acquired above; this result is consistent with what other SLA experts have indicated, namely, that male learners have more vocabulary mastery since they frequently utilize and introduce vocabulary when engaging. He obtains good listeners for his interlocutors in many communities, as well as more sophisticated translators, so that language and the learning process during these exchanges produce a large amount of output. Meanwhile, because women are more focused on acquiring language in the learning space, female learners are superior in analyzing meaning based on complete understanding, and it is easier to memorize vocabulary while studying and formal vocabulary in the classroom (Dickinson & Porche, 2011; Hill & Miller, 2013).

Another aspect revealed was the activity of translating material from English, which is a foreign language, into Indonesian meaning, which became the most popular and thought to be relatively simple by students. As the objective of verbal communication, so that it can stimulate their intuition to feel the meaning of words without being influenced by the actual meaning if translated properly so that it is understood to be a good entire sentence translation and without being influenced by grammar (Devi & Deb, 2018; Sutiyo, 2018; Megawati & Hartono, 2020). Furthermore, if it is integrated with two basic knowledge that must be learned and mastered by language learners, namely systemic knowledge, which focuses on knowledge of grammar, semantics, pragmatics, and syntax; it must be considered first, because schematic knowledge, namely knowledge of genre knowledge, topic knowledge, general knowledge, and socio-cultural knowledge, is much more important to master first for novice learners (Crain & Thornton, 2000; Taguchi & Ishihara, 2018; Moore, Schleppegrell, & Palincsar, 2018; Wafi, 2019; Cassani, Chuang, & Baayen, 2020). L2 (mother tongue language), L3 (Arabic language) that differs from the target language in terms of structure, grammar, pronunciation, tenses, and irregular verbs, or L4 (native language) (English). Furthermore, because class VII falls within the category of young learners, acquiring translation and vocabulary mastery at that age is superior and simple to grasp.

Last, there is an internal incentive influence from male students who are more enthusiastic to speak up with strong self-confidence than female students who are constantly watched on weekly discipline evaluations, according to interviews with tutors and school assessment coordinators. covering DIJUSTAPE (disciplined, honest, tough, caring, and smart), daily amaliyah, and 24-hour monitoring of activities by parents, instructors, tutors, homeroom teachers, and native speakers for character building (Thresia, 2015; Laili, 2017; Eliawati & Harahap, 2019; Milal et al., 2020)). These findings support Nikolov & Djigunović (2006); Dixon et al., (2012); Cahyono & Rahayu's (2020) theory that internal motivation of SLA learners is the most important factor of external social factors on learners' success and fluency in mastering receptive skills in EFL learning, specifically with the Birkhenbhl method, and productive skills in general as the next step in learning.

### **Conclusions and Suggestions**

The results of the English language acquisition or SLA training using the Birkenbihl method for 1-4 weeks in the virtual English Camp program show that: 1) male students outperform female students in vocabulary mastery when decoding text and active listening activities, 2) female students outperform male students in understanding comprehension of the text as a whole based on context, 3) student age has an effect on the SLA process, and 4) Internal motivation from character building



has an influence on receptive skill progress. Based on this conclusion, it is clear that the Birkenbihl method is effective in improving students' abilities, particularly their receptive skills, as evidenced by the recapitulation of the weekly portfolio value, which always increases and exceeds the KKM. The integration of training involving practitioners, academics, parents, and stakeholders went well in general.

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