

THE UTILIZATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIA IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO YOUNG LEARNERS (A Case Study of an Elementary School Teacher in Bandung)

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Abstract: Many English teachers in Indonesia had difficulty in utilizing instructional media in classrooms. The difficulty was caused by the thought of good media were expensive. Therefore, this study aimed to describe the teacher's preparation and to explain how the teacher utilized the instructional media in the classroom. This study used qualitative case design and employed observation, interview and data analysis to obtain the data. The result of this study showed that the teacher did two kinds of preparation in utilizing the instructional media, reading the materials and choosing the media. In utilizing the media, the teacher utilized the provided media in the school and did not utilize it optimally due to several challenges, such as limitation of time, difficulty in selecting media, lack of media availability, and teacher's negative belief towards instructional media and the system. In conclusion, instructional media utilization was not optimally done by the teacher and it needed to be improved. Therefore, the teacher needed to participate in a training program to optimize the teacher's instructional media utilization.

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Introduction

Teaching English to young learners is considered necessary needs in Indonesia especially in big cities (Rodliyah, 2009). Many parents compete to make their children learn English as younger as they are. The issue is how the school deals with this phenomenon and how they could provide the students with effective and efficient learning. There are many factors influencing the effective and efficient of learning. Two of them are the media and the characteristics of the

students. Smaldino et al., (2006) argue when media is used for instructional purposes and utilized to canalize teacher-students communication, it categorized as instructional media. Nevertheless, the utilization of the instructional media seems not effective in teaching English to young learners in Indonesia (Mutohhar, 2009). The effectiveness of media is not about the teachers utilize media or not in the classroom, but it deals with how the teachers optimize the

utilization of the instructional media in the classroom.

According to a study conducted by Mutohhar (2009), many elementary school teachers in Indonesia deliver their material in such a way but makes the students still bored, not enjoying the learning process. Many of the teachers only utilize the provided media in the schools and utilize it to show the materials only without transferring the knowledge in attractive ways to the students. This phenomenon appears because some of them think that a good media is expensive media and sophisticated media which needs cost much money. Whereas, Mutohhar (2009) argues that a good media is media which is suitable for the topic, material, the students, and practical to use. In other words, a good media doesn't need to be expensive, it just needs to be reusable, and so it can help the teacher to create an effective instruction in the classroom.

The study related to utilization in teaching young learners and how the teacher reflects the teacher's perception on the media utilization is still limited in Indonesian context. Thus, this study aims to find out the utilization of instructional media in teaching English to young learners and how the teacher reflects the teacher's perception on

media utilization, specifically to teacher who teachers in elementary school which has A grade level accreditation in a suburban area. To achieve the research objectives, two research questions are formulated in this study as below.

a. What kind of preparation does the teacher have in utilizing instructional media?

b. How does teacher utilize the instructional media in the classroom?

By knowing how teacher utilizes the instructional media in the classroom, it is expected that deeper information can encourage teachers, especially elementary school teachers in suburban area, to improve the media utilization in teaching English to young learners. It is considered necessary due to the media utilization in creating meaningful teaching learning process in classroom.

Literature Review

• Young Learners

Pinter (2011) categorizes young learners into three groups of age: (1) pre-school; (2) primary school years; and (3) early adolescents. Pre-school level is children who are aged 3- 5 years old.. The next group is primary school years which includes children who are 6- 12 years old. In this level, children attend elementary school and in some countries

they leave elementary school in 11 or 12 years old. The last group of children is early adolescents. In this stage, children go to upper grade and leave their elementary schools. In this study, young learners are students in elementary schools which are in 6-12 years old.

Teaching young learners is different from teaching adults. There are several characteristics that need to be considered in creating effective instruction in teaching. Brown (2001) purposes some characteristics that may give some practical approaches in teaching young learners: (1) intellectual development; (2) attention span; (3) sensory input; (4) affective factors; and (5) authentic, meaningful language. One of some principle keys to embrace all of the characteristics and make an effective instruction in young learners' classroom, is teachers need to utilize the instructional media optimally in the classroom.

• **Instructional Media**

Instructional media are defined by Sadiman et al. (1986) as anything used to send information from the sender(s) to the receiver(s) to arise learners' curiosity and encourage them to learn. Related to the definition above, Reisser and Dick (1996) purposed that instructional media might be all the traditional ways to

deliver and the lesson (teachers, chalkboards, textbooks, and other printed materials) or the new instructional media (CD Room, computer, interactive video and multimedia system). In this study, instructional media are defined as tools used in educational setting to deliver the materials, information to reach effective teaching-learning.

Instructional media has several benefits in teaching English, especially in teaching English to young learners. There are several benefits in utilizing instructional media in teaching English. Scanlan (s.d) states several benefits of instructional media, such as: (1) attracting attention; (2) developing interest; (3) adjusting the learning environment and (4) promoting the acceptance of an idea.

There are several types of instructional media that can be utilized in teaching English to young learners. In this study, Harmer's classification of instructional media is used as the reference of the instructional media types. There are (seven) types of instructional media: realia; pictures; course book; boards; OHP; flipcharts; and computer based-technology.

1. Realia

In TEFL Survival's Site, (2012) realia means using real objects inside or

outside classroom to teach English. It can provide experiences for students to involve students' senses in learning.

2. Pictures

Pictures and images are one of graphic materials examples. Graphic materials refer to "non-photo-graphic" or "two dimensional materials" designed to convey messages and information which combines "symbolic visual" and verbal information. Drawings, charts, graphics and also cartoons are kinds of this media. Pictures can be used for several purposes, such as drills, communication, understanding, ornamentation, prediction and discussion.

3. Course book

Course book is one of print media (Onasanya, 2004) which has been used by teachers as the guide of teaching learning (Gabrielatos, 2004). It is printed materials and information (Aini, 2013). It also contains exercises and tasks for students.

4. Boards

Boards refer to blackboard, whiteboard or any board used in classroom. Candler (2011) states several benefits in using whiteboard in teaching English in classroom: engaging students in lesson; monitoring students' comprehension of the lesson; can be utilized easily; saving paper; students

can interact with it easily; no need technical support and not consuming time. Boards can be used in various different purposes, such as: note pad, explanation aid, picture frame, public workbook, game board and notice board.

5. OHP

OHP or Overhead projectors are useful for teachers in showing many things on overhead transparencies. Onasanya (2004) states one of the advantage by using OHP, students can see the materials in front of the class. It also helps teacher to show something one by one.

6. Flipcharts

Flipchart is a media which contains big sheets of paper (Aini, 2013). It is mostly used during discussion to write down points that are being discussed.

7. Computer-based presentation technology

Harmer (2007) states that this instructional media have two main components, hardware and software. In addition, Onasanya (2004) states this media combine audio and visual presentation which can help teachers to attract students' attention. This kind of media also can send a large amount of information.

From the description about the instructional media above, it can be

concluded that there are many types of instructional media that can be used in teaching learning activities. Those different types help teacher in different teaching-learning activities and materials. Although various instructional media have been developed, not all of them can be used in the same time. Teacher needs to choose the most appropriate instructional media due to the students' characteristics, the materials and the teaching method (Clark, 1999).

Methodology

This study was a case study which aimed to find out the process of how teacher utilized the instructional media, from the preparation until the problems that he encountered and how teacher dealt with it, and to capture the phenomenon of the real situation in an elementary school without intervention from the writer. Yin (2003) argued that case study method is "preferred strategy when 'how' or why questions are being posed, when investigator has little control over events and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context".

This study was conducted in an elementary school in Bandung, West Java. The school was selected to be the

research site because of the location of the school and the level accreditation of the school. The school has A level of accreditation, but the location of the school is not like the other elementary schools which has A level of accreditation. The school is located in a suburban area, not in downtown area like many A level elementary schools location. The respondent was a specialist teacher of the school. According to Slattery & Willis (2009) specialist teacher is a teacher who only teaches English in several classes. There was no specific requirement for the teachers to be involved in this study, except teaching English only and using instructional media in teaching learning process.

In collecting data, this study employed three types of data, those are observation, interview and document analysis. Those multiple types of data are the varied nature of qualitative data which can help the writer to establish the complexity of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2008). Observation was employed to get information about how teacher utilizes his instructional media in the classroom. In observing the classroom, the writer employed a non-respondent observation, where participating in the observation is a

forbid act for the writer to get portray of real situation (Frankael & Wallen, 2012) and took a role as a complete observer who “is probably least likely to affect the actions of the group being studied”. The observation was conducted three times in the classroom.

In this study, interview was used to find out about teacher’s philosophy and how the teacher reflected his philosophy on his teaching and media utilization. An in-depth interview was employed, so the questions could be developed as needed. The interview itself was conducted formally and informally. Formal interview was employed after the whole of the observations, while the informal interview was employed before and after each observation.

Document analysis was also employed in this study. Document analysis was aimed to give explanation about the preparation that teacher did before utilizing his instructional media in classroom and to help the writer know whether the teaching learning process goals were accomplished as the teacher’s plan or not in using the instructional media. The document analyzed in this study was the teacher’s lesson plans which were asked before the observations.

To analyze the data, this study used steps that purposed by Creswell in analyzing qualitative study, which are divided into several steps: (1) collecting data, (2) preparing data for analysis, (3) reading through data, (4) coding the data and (5) coding the text for description and text for themes to be used in the research report.

Data Presentation and Discussion

- **Teacher’s Preparation in Utilizing the Instructional Media**

To find out the preparation done by the teacher, this study employed interview as the main instrument, while teacher’s lesson plans and classroom observation results were analyzed as the additional instrument which could support the findings from the interviews. In this study, it was found that the teacher did two kinds of preparation in utilizing the instructional media in the classroom. Those preparations were mastering the materials and designing or selecting the instructional media. For both preparation, the teacher did it one night before teaching in the classroom.

In the first preparation, the teacher did not find any difficulties to master the materials. The teacher uttered that he read the materials one night before teaching to ensure that the teaching

learning activities on the next day would be on the right track. This preparation was reflected well on the observations because during the observations, the teacher confidently delivered the materials.

In designing or selecting the materials, the teacher concerned about three factors of the instructional media selection, those factors were practicality of the media preparation and utilization, students' appropriateness toward the selected media and instructional appropriateness toward the materials and the activities. Those factors became the reason of his decision in utilizing the instructional media.

Differs from the first preparation, in the second preparation the teacher encountered several problems. Those problems were limited time; difficulty in selecting instructional media; negative belief towards instructional media; lack of availability of instructional media; and negative belief towards the system.

To encounter the problems that appeared in designing and selecting instructional media, the teacher mostly had one ultimate way which was utilizing the available media. With the limited facility in the school and the financial support that also affected how teacher selected the instructional media,

the teacher only utilized instructional media which were available at school. Because to utilize other instructional media or copy some pages of the materials would cost much money which the teacher did not have.

• **The Ways the Teacher Utilizes the Instructional Media in the Classroom**

To discover the ways in which the teacher utilizes the instructional media in his classroom, the writer observed the teacher's class three times. The observations were conducted in three consecutive meetings to see the real situation while the teacher was utilizing his instructional media and to see the dynamic of instructional media utilization.

The ways the teacher utilized the instructional media in the classroom depended on the instructional media. In this study, it is found that from seven types of instructional media which are common to be used in the classroom, the teacher only utilizes three media, the media are whiteboard, course book and realia

The first media utilized by the teacher is whiteboard. Whiteboard has several benefits in teaching. Meanwhile, in the observations and interviews, the teacher only utilized the whiteboard for

four purposes, such as notepad, as explanation aid, as public workbook and as picture frame.

The first purpose of board utilization is utilized as notepad. By using whiteboard, the teacher could write the materials and some important words on it. The students also could see it clearly from the back. By utilizing whiteboard, the teacher also could elicit information and wrote some examples which could help students to understand the materials. The second purpose of whiteboard utilization in teaching English to young learners in teacher's classroom is as explanation aid. Whiteboard as explanation aid means that the whiteboard can be used as a medium explain the concept of the materials which are not easy to be understood by the students. The third purpose of whiteboard utilization is utilizing it as public workbook. Public workbook means the teacher can write the exercise on the board and the students and the teacher can discuss it together. The last purpose of whiteboard utilized by the teacher in the observation is utilizing the whiteboard as picture frame. According to Harmer (2007) whiteboard can be used by teacher to draw something, the draw does not need to be artistic but if it

can help teacher to explain the concepts of the lesson or the words.

The second media utilized by the teacher in teaching in the classroom is course book. As the only source of the materials, in all of the observations, course book held important role in the teaching learning process. In this study, the course book were used as source of exercise and source of materials. The importance of course book was not balanced with the available course book in the school. To fix the availability issue, the teacher decided to write the exercises and the materials on the board.

The last media utilized by the teacher is realia. During the observations, the teacher only utilized it once, in the first meeting, which was aimed to elicit the students and to engage the students' attention. By using realia, the teacher delivered the materials more attractively and it caught students' attention easily.

In utilizing the media to deliver the materials, the teacher did not find any difficulty. The only difficulty that teacher encountered in media utilization was running out of ink. This minor problem was appeared once in the study and the teacher solved the problem quickly because he always brought additional markers to the classroom.

Despite the result of interview and observation, this study also used lesson plans as data. The lesson plans scored in this study were only two, whereas the teacher taught three lesson in the observations. The lesson plan was assessed through a rubric which has eight categories on it, such as standards; objectives; materials, instructional media; introduction; procedures; assessment and closure. The assessment of document analysis is based on four scores: 1 (beginning); 2 (developing); 3 (accomplished) and 4 (exemplary).

From the lesson plan scoring, it can be concluded that the teacher had accomplished well about his teaching. Most of the components in the lesson plan were clearly stated and similar to what he did in the classroom. Unfortunately, the other components given limited attention by the teacher, such as list of materials which were not stated on the lesson plans the procedures of teaching that did not clearly stated and assessments which did not match with the assessment that he did in the classroom.

Conclusions

The research had attempted to answer questions related to teacher's preparation in utilizing instructional

media and the ways the teacher utilized instructional media in teaching English to young learners.

Firstly the teacher did two kind of preparations in utilizing instructional media which were still not optimum. The preparations dealt with preparing the materials and selecting the instructional media. The teacher succeed in mastering the materials but in terms of creating varied activities, this decision was not wise. By only spending a night before teaching, the teacher tended to create the same activities in every meeting. Second, the ways teacher utilized instructional media in the classroom are depended to the types of instructional media he used and the utilization was not optimized. There was a little variation in the media utilization. Whereas, he could utilize the media more if he spent more time to create meaningful teaching learning activities and spent less time overthinking other factors.

In this study, the teacher philosophy in teaching English to young learners was also reflected during the observations. By utilizing the only provided media, the teacher tried to achieve his goal in teaching which was encouraging his students to communicate in English simply.

Overall, these findings of this study verified that the process in utilization of instructional media of an elementary school teacher needs improvement. The teacher did the preparations and utilized the instructional media but those were still in minimum way. Although there were lack of instructional media availability and some issue that diverted the teacher's concern in teaching, the teacher could optimize the preparations and the utilization by spending less time to overthinking about them.

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