Providing Instructional Media for Teaching Language to Young Learners

Dian Reftyawati [1]
bundadyan88@gmail.com

Abstract: Teaching a language for children is not an easy thing, but it is important. One important factor in learning English for children is teachers who care about the needs of their students. This study discussed the types of media prepared by teachers in language learning, especially in English. It aimed to answer the following questions: 1) How do teachers select language learning media for children? What problems do teachers face in the preparation of language learning media for children? To collect the data, the researcher employed observation and interview techniques. The results of the study showed lack of instructional media in schools and a lack of teachers' knowledge in using various instructional media.

Keywords*: instructional media, media selection, young learners*

Abstrak: Mengajar bahasa untuk anak-anak bukanlah hal yang mudah, tetapi merupakan hal yang penting. Salah satu faktor penting dalam belajar bahasa Inggris untuk anak-anak adalah guru yang peduli dengan kebutuhan siswa mereka. Penelitian ini membahas jenis media yang disiapkan oleh guru dalam pembelajaran bahasa, terutama dalam bahasa Inggris yang bertujuan untuk menjawab pertanyaan-pertanyaan berikut: 1) Bagaimana para guru memilih media pembelajaran bahasa untuk anak-anak? Masalah apa yang dihadapi guru dalam persiapan media pembelajaran bahasa untuk anak-anak? Untuk mengumpulkan data, peneliti menggunakan teknik observasi dan wawancara. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan kurangnya media pembelajaran di sekolah dan kurangnya pengetahuan guru dalam menggunakan berbagai media pembelajaran.

Kata-kata kunci: *media pembelajaran, pemilihan media, pembelajar muda*

[1] *Lecturer of English Education Department of STKIP PGRI Metro, Lampung*

Language learning of young learners is an interesting topic for research. It is not an easy to teach language to young learners, especially when what is taught is a foreign language. There are many factors that influence the effective and efficient of learning. Two of them are media and learners' characteristics. In Indonesia English is one of the foreign languages taught in elementary schools. The main task that needs to be done by teachers is to make learning foreign languages interesting. Making students like the foreign language itself becomes the main target in learning.

According to a study conducted by Mutohhar (2009), teachers in many schools in Indonesia deliver their materials in such a way but make the students bored and not enjoy the learning process. Many of the teachers only used the media that are provided in schools and show the materials only without transferring the knowledge in attractive ways to the students. This phenomenon appears because some of them think that good media are expensive and sophisticated media which cost much money. Mutohhar (2009) argues that good media are media which are suitable for the topic, the material, the students, and practical to use. In other words, good media do not need to be expensive; they just need to be reusable, so they can help the teacher to create an effective instruction in the classroom

This study aims to find out what kinds of instructional media that are used in teaching English to young learners and the teacher's perception about preparing the media for utilization. To achieve the research objectives, three research questions are formulated.

a. What types of media do teachers prepare in teaching English language for young learners?
b. How do teachers select and use instructional media for teaching English to young learners?
c. What problems do teachers encounter in using instructional media?

By knowing answers to these questions, it is expected that the teaching learning quality can be improved and the local government gives more attention to make instructional media available in all elementary schools.

Literature Review on Young Learners

The teaching and learning of English in elementary school provides the students' English language competencies in the golden age –the age that children can learn anything easily. The two of those competencies are called linguistic competence and linguistic performance. It is in accordance with Chomsky in Clark and Clark (1977, p. 6) who states that linguistic competence is one's capacity to use a language, while linguistic performance is the actual application of this competence in speaking or listening. Furthermore, Brown, (1987, p. 24) states that competence refers to one's underlying knowledge of a system, event, or fact. It is the non-observable, idealized ability to do something, to perform something. Performance is the overtly observable and concrete manifestation or realization of competence. It is the actual doing of something: walking, singing, dancing, or speaking

Pinter (2011) categorizes young learners into three age groups: (1) preschool; (2) primary school years; and (3) early adolescents. The pre-school level comprises children who are 3-5 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) mentions some charac-teristics 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 provide the instructional media optimally in the classroom.

Instructional Media

In English teaching, especially in teaching young learners, instructional media offer several benefits. There are 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 provided 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: 1) realia,2) pictures,3) course book,4) boards, 4) over-head projectors,5) flipcharts, and 6) computer based-technology.

Realia

Realia is defined by Nunan (1999, p. 313) as ― objects and teaching ― props' from the world outside the classroom that are used for teaching and learning So, it can be inferred that realia is unmodified real things inside or outside the classroom which is used by the teacher for teaching learning process. Realia can be used as starting point to introduce the lesson and/or understanding concept of the material.

Pictures

Pictures and images are one of graphic materials examples. Graphic materials refer to "non-photo-graphic" or "two dimen-sional 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, orn-amentation, prediction and discussion.

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

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; 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.

Overhead Projector (OHP)

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

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.

Computer-based Presentation echnology

Harmer (2007) said that this instruc-tional media has two vital components. They are hardware and software. The hardware needed for this instructional media are computer and LCD projector. This instructional media combines both audio and visual material.

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)

METHOD

This study was a case study which aimed to find out the types of media prepared by teachers in teaching English language for young learners and how the teachers provided and also selected the instructional media for teaching English language for young learners. Yin (2002) 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 three different elementary schools in Sukarame, Bandar Lampung. The schools have different level of accreditation, location and facilities. The participants were three English teachers from those schools. There was no special requirement for the teachers involved in this study, except using instructional media in teaching learning activities. 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, such as observation, interview and document analysis. The observation was non-participant observ-

ation, in which the researcher was only a complete observer. The observation was purposed to identify what instructional media provided by the teachers and for what purposes those instructional media used in teaching learning activities. This obser-vation was conducted three times for each teacher. Meanwhile, interview was employed formally and informally. Formal interview was conducted mainly to find out the problems occur related to instructional media utilization and how the teachers solve them. In the meantime, the informal interview was employed to check whether or not the information obtained from observation was appropriate. However, since they were in-depth interviews, the questions could be developed as needed. Document analysis was also employed in this study. Document analysis was aimed to give explanation about the preparation that the teachers did before utilizing his instructional media in classroom and to help the writer know whether or not the teaching learning process goals were accomplished according to the teachers' plan in using the instructional media. The documents analyzed in this study were the teachers' lesson plans which were asked before the observations.

In analyzing the data, it used steps proposed by Creswell (2008) which were: (1) collecting data, (2) preparing data for analysis, (3) reading through the data, (4) coding the data, (5) and coding the text for themes and description to be used in the research paper

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Types of Instructional Media Provided by the Teachers

From seven types of instructional media classified by Harmer (2007), there were only four types of instructional media which were utilized by the teachers in this study. They comprise: (1) whiteboards; (2) realia; (3) pictures and (4) course books. Each of those instructional media was used for variety of purposes which were based on

what Harmer (2007) has classified. To begin with, boards were generally used as notepad, explanation aid, picture frame and public workbook. Next is realia. This kind of instructional media was used for both engaging and eliciting the students in teaching learning activities. Different from realia, pictures had different purposes in the instructions. Based on the findings, the pictures were employed by the teachers to drill vocabularies, present meaning also to discuss the lesson. Last instructional media, which is book, was utilized by the teachers to do give exercises to the students about the lesson and to be used as source for the material.

Teacher's Preparation in Selecting the Instructional Media

To find out the preparation done by the teacher, this study employed interview as the main instrument. The teacher's lesson plans and results of classroom observation were analyzed as the additional instrument which could support the findings from the interviews. According to Reiser and Dick (1996), in selecting instructional media, the teachers should consider three main factors comprising: (1) practicality (available, cost efficient and time efficient); (2) appropriateness for students (consider students' characteristics and learning condition) and (3) instructional appropriateness (employ appropriate materials, instructional goals and activities).

In this study, it was found that the teacher did two kinds of preparation in providing the instructional media in the classroom. Those preparations were mastering the materials and designing or selecting the instructional media. For both preparations, the teacher did it one night before teaching in the classroom.

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, 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.

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

The Use of Instructional Media for Teaching English Language for Young Learners

The ways the teacher use the instructional media in the classroom depended on the instructional media. In this study, it was found that from seven types of instructional media which are common to be used in the classroom, the teacher only used four typesof media, i.e. whiteboard, course book, realia, and pictures. 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. Whiteboard has several benefits in teaching. Meanwhile, in the observations and interviews, the teacher only utilized the whiteboard forfour purposes, such as notepad, as explanation aid, as public workbook and as picture frame. The first purpose of whiteboard 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 form 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

The second media used 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 was 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 next media used 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

Finally, the last media used by the teacher is picture as the media in the classroom. Finding pictures is very simple and does not take a lot of time. Pictures come from many sources: magazines, newspapers, posters, search engines, to name a few. Since many pictures are available from so many sources, it takes very little time for teachers to choose and prepare the lesson. Furthermore, Picture can use in teach skill. In Vocabulary Building or Review, Teacher can explain the vocabulary by picture to students understand easily. It means that using picture will make the children easier to remember and understand the new vocabulary that they get. In Listening, the teacher then asks the students to draw a picture according to what they hear. An alternative would be to ask two students to draw on the board. In Reading, students can arrange pictures follow the content of the text. In Speaking, the teacher asks a few students to look at their own pictures and retell the story. In Writing, when Teacher required students to write a story, Teacher can give some picture relate to content of stories to students can imagine.

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 lessons 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 is 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 the assessment that he did in the classroom.

Teachers' Problems in Selecting and Using Instructional Media

Based on the data, problems were encountered by the teachers not only in using instructional media but also in selecting them. In selecting instructional media, the problems encountered by the teachers were limited time, limited cost allocation, availability of instructional media, appropriateness of instructional media, and teachers' negative belief towards instructional media. Problems were also experienced by the teachers in the process of utilizing media. The teachers often encountered technical problems, for instance running out of supply and the dysfunction of high-tech instructional media used. The last was personal problem. It dealt with the difficulty experienced by the teacher in explaining content in the instructional media.

Due to the existence of various problems in both selecting and using instructional media, the teachers had several ways to overcome them. The first, to overcome problems in process of instructional media selection – regarding limited time and cost, unavailability of media in the school — all of the teachers had the same action, that is using the readily-available-instructional media in the school. With all of the inadequacy in their school, they tried to optimize the instructional media provided to help the students reach the instructional goals. Teachers' backgrounds and experiences influence the types of instructional media that they chose.

CONCLUSION

This study had attemptedPto answer questions related to teachers' preparation in using instructional media and the ways the teachers used instructional media in teaching English to young learners. Results of the study showed that there was a lack of instructional media availability in the schools. In addition, there was a lack of utilization of various instructional media. Besides, the appropriateness of the instructional media for students' characteristics was less considered by the teachers. Therefore, the provision of instructional media in the three elementary schools involved in the study still needs to be improved. Moreover, it is expected that the local government give more attention at supplying instructional media in all elementary schools in Sukarame equally. Additionally, teachers are expected to be able to use the available instructional media without putting aside students' characteristics. Furthermore, they are also expected to learn to utilize high-technology instructional media in order to enhance the quality of instruction.

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