ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AT MAKASSAR PRIMARY SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract
The research aims to describe current practice of English as a foreign language at primary schools. The case study conducted at two favorite elementary schools in Makassar involving 84 students. The data gained through observation, questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The study revealed that teachers used textbook as the main resources for teaching besides using media and physical objects. The research identifies that there are a lot of challenges faced by both teachers and students in teaching and learning English. From teachers' perspective, the difficulties are limited availability of materials, allocation of time, class size, and using teaching media. Students preferred variety of teaching method as well as materials. From the learners viewed that time allocation is not enough, and teaching material are not varied. It is suggested that the government should provide a variety of teaching materials that can assist teachers and students in teaching and learning English.

Keywords: English teaching material, teaching aids, time allocation, and challenges.

INTRODUCTION

Internationally, the change of status of English as *a lingua franca* and the change of language policies as well as a rapid growing need to have proficiency in English have impacted the role of English as international language. As a consequence, the demand for higher level of English learning generates 'the growing pressures' for teachers, learners, educational department and other educational stakeholders (Richards, 2006).

In Asian context, the establishment of AFTA (Asian Free Trade Area) started from 2003 has led to a dramatic change in Indonesia**.** This has created enormous demand by Indonesia students to learn English as international language. People realize the difficulty in getting employment and the increase of high competition in the job market require high quality and professionalism (Rudder, 2006). Most employment requires English conversation certificates and English interview for new official. As a consequence, English requirements in business have changed as well. The usage of English in media and technology has increased dramatically the demand of communicative English learning. The students' eager of using the internet and computer has motivated them to learn English. Most internet users in the world use English to communicate and computers in Indonesia are set in English.

A number of researchers suggested that English should be taught at elementary school starting from kindergarten (Rasyid, 1993: Erlina, 1998: Department of National Education, 1994). The growing demand of English language instruction among the Indonesian population and unsatisfactory result of current English competence are the main reasons, why English should be taught at elementary level.

Responding to the global and national changes, the government of Indonesia put English as one of the local content materials at elementary school. Department of National Education (1994) officially placed English as one of the local content material in elementary school stated that the aim of the English taught as local content material is to enable students to read, understand, pronounce, and write a number of English vocabulary and

simple sentences and phrases, to be used to communicate in their school environment and society. However, as a local content material, English is not taught compulsory.

In Makassar, English language was first introduced in elementary school in 1982. English was taught at SD Hati Kudus as one of the elective subject in school (Massarang, 1982). Then in the following years, there was a growing interest of other favorite primary schools to teach English as one of the local content subject. The aim of the research was to find out the current practice of English language teaching at elementary schools by looking at the teachers and students perspectives especially in relation to the English teaching materials, teaching aids, and time allocation. It was also to uncover the challenges teachers faced in teaching English at primary school level.

CONCEPT UNDERPINNING THE STUDY

The study used Piaget theory of stages development (1970), Vygotsky theory of Zone of Proximal Development (1962), Bruner theory on scaffolding (1983) and Garner's concept on multiple intelligence (cited from Pinter, 2010). In addition, a number theorists such as Brown's concepts (2001) and Pinter (2010) and a number of research findings relating to the need and practice of teaching English at elementary school (see Rasyid, 1993: Erlina, 1998: Salasiah, 1999: Hidayat, 2006).

The principle theories of teaching young learners are:

a. Children are active learners and thinkers (Piaget, 1970). Children construct knowledge from actively interacting with the physical environment in developmental stages. They learn through their own individual actions and exploration. Piagetian stages of development (cited from Pinter, 2012) cover four levels: *first* is sensori-motor stage from birth to two years of age that young children learn to interact with the environment by manipulating objects around them; *second* is pre-operational stage from two to seven years of age that child's thinking is largely reliant on perception but he or she gradually becomes more and more capable of logical thinking; *third* is concrete operational stage from seven to eleven years of age that children thinking begins to resemble 'logical' adult thinking and they develops ability to apply logical reasoning in several areas of knowledge at the same time such as math, science, or map reading; *fourth* is formal operational stage from eleven years onwards that children are able to think beyond the immediate context in more abstract terms and they are able to carry out logical operations such as deductive reasoning in a systematic way.

b. Children learn through social interaction (Vygotsky, 1962). Children construct knowledge through other people, through interaction with adults. Adults/teachers work actively with children in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) refers to the difference between the child's capacity to solve problems on his own and his capacity to solve them with assistance.

c. Children learn effectively through scaffolding by adults (Bruner, 1983). The adult's role is very important in a child's learning process. Like Vygotsky, Bruner focused on the importance of language in a child's cognitive development. He shows how the adult uses "scaffolding" to guide a child's language learning through finely-tuned talk. (Cameron, 2001). Bruner stated that parents who scaffolded effectively: a). created interest in the task; b) broke the task down into smaller steps; c) kept child "on task" by reminding him

of the purpose or goal; d) pointed out the important parts of the task; e) controlled the child's frustration during the task; and f) modeled the task, including different ways to do the task.

Gardner's Framework of Multiple Intelligence which was published in 1983 are also known as the learning styles of children, as follows:

Linguistics	Sensitivity to the sound, rhythm, and meaning of words and the different functions of language
Logico-mathemathical	Sensitivity to and capacity to detect logical and numerical patterns, ability to handle long chains of logical reasoning
Musical	Ability to produce or appreciate pitch, rhythm, or melody and aesthetic-sounding tones, understanding of the forms of musical expressiveness
Spatial	Ability to perceive the visual/spatial world accurately, to perform transformation on those perceptions, and to recreate aspects of visual experience in absence of relevant stimuli
Bodily-kinesthetic	Ability to use the body skilfully for expressive as well as goal oriented purposes, ability to handle objects skillfully
Interpersonal	Ability to detect and respond appropriately to the moods, temperaments, motivations, and intentions of others
Intrapersonal	Ability to discriminate complex inner feelings and to use them to guide one's own behaviour, knowledge of one's own strengths, weaknesses, desires, and intelligences
Naturalist	Ability to recognize and classify varieties of animals, minerals, and plants.

Brown (2001: 87) said that "teaching English to school-age children, therefore, is not merely a matter of setting them loose on a plethora of authentic language task in the classroom. To successfully teach children a language requires specific skills and intuitions that differ from those appropriate for adult teaching". Brown (2001:87-90) identified several factors affecting language development in children: (1) intellectual development, the children up to the age eleven years old are still in the stage of intellectual development, as Piaget in Brown (2001) called " concrete operation"; (2) authentic span, which means that children at this stage tend to capture their immediate interest around them; (3) sensory input, where children tends to prefer physical activity, visual activities such as using picture, music, etc; (4) affective factors refers to egos of the children are still being formed, and therefore their emotion tends to be not stable; (5) authentic meaningful language deals with the children are focused on what language can be used around them.

Rasyid (1993) identified three important issues for teaching English at primary level, as follows: the availability of professional teachers, availabilities of materials and allocation of time. Similarly, Erlina (1998) who investigated the elementary school concluded that factors affecting the ELT in elementary level are teachers, material, classroom management, class physical condition, class room climate, and students' motivation. In addition, context of teaching

influences the teaching and learning process (Salasiah, 1999). She added that a comfortable context would assist a teacher to transfer knowledge to their students and to use teaching aids as media of teaching and learning process in class room.

However, teaching English at elementary school can be very challenging. Recent research, that was conducted in Jambi Province, by Hidayat (2006) revealed that teaching English as a local content at the primary schools faced several challenges involving insufficient qualified teachers, lack of financial rewards, and unavailability of standard curriculum. He further explained that teaching English at primary school burdens the schools and the teachers because teachers have limited background knowledge and skills that leads them have lack of confidence in teaching English.

RESEARCH METHOD

The data gained through observation, questionnaire and interview. The observation was conducted to get an understanding of teaching and learning in classroom context. The questionnaire was used to get the learners' perspective on teaching English at primary level. In addition, semi-structured interview was conducted to gain a deeper understanding of teachers' viewpoints in ELT practice in elementary schools.

The questionnaire used Liker scale model that helps students to answer the question easily. The questionnaire was pre-tested to the four students in elementary schools in order to avoid misunderstanding of the items provided. The questionnaire data was analyzed through excel program while the interview data and observation was analyzed manually.

The data were classified based on the categories as follows:
 a. Teachers' perspective: teaching materials, teaching aids, and time allocation.
 b. Students' view: teaching materials, teaching aids, and time allocation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Teacher's Perspective

Research indicated both teachers on two schools encountered much similarity of using material in teaching English in elementary school. In terms of teaching material, they really relied on textbook. As the teachers explained below:

> I really rely on the textbook as the source of teaching materials (Q1).
> I use students' work sheet as complement for teaching (Q1).
> The book I used is from Pabelan press, and from Department of National Education of South Sulawesi province (Q2).
> I used the book written by Sudirman, English for Children published by Karya Ilmu and English for Children written by AR Lehan published by Terbit Terang Press (Q2).

During the observation, we found that the teachers used the textbook as the only source of teaching material. The reason why they depended on the textbook is that the material availability is limited. Teachers often gave students work sheet that contained a number of questions and exercises that students had to get through. The findings from the observation showed also that materials presented by teachers including simple reading text and make simple sentence in English. Some of the grammar material were simple sentences, such as *go to Tana Toraja* and *I go to Bantimurung.* Both teachers always read the materials before asking their students to imitate and repeat them. Teachers often read the materials more than four times in order to make sure that the students can read and pronounce the word correctly.

In terms of teaching aids, the equipment they used for teaching English were English cassettes, pictures and physical objects around the school. Those teaching aids assist

teachers to present English teaching material. As the teachers described as follows:

> I usually used media for teaching. I bring the English cassettes for listening comprehension (Q3). I used only the objects around the school such as flowers and other plants. I prefer non electronic equipment to use for teaching. (Q4).

The expectation of teachers was the government should provide a number of resources that help teachers to increase students' motivation to learn English. In addition, teachers expected to have professional development programs through regular trainings in teaching methods, designing materials, language assessment, language games, and knowledge of English.

Challenges for Teachers

Teachers encountered several problems in teaching English at elementary school. The problems are as follows:

a. Limited availability of teaching materials
b. Large class size makes it difficult to manage
c. Limited allocation of time
d. Finding appropriate teaching method.

The appropriate materials for teaching are quite difficult to get especially for elementary schools. Some books may available at the bookshops but the teachers unable to buy such books because they are very expensive.

Therefore, they use very limited materials that support their teaching and learning process. The other challenge in teaching is the class size which contains more than forty students in one class room. This large class makes it difficult for teachers to manage and to control. In addition, larger class makes students have very limited chances to ask and to do different exercises.

Teachers believed that time allocation for teaching English at elementary schools should be more than 2 x 40 minutes. It means that the time allocation that provided for English as one of the local contents in school should be added. Finally, teachers find it difficult to choose the appropriate method for teaching English because of the level of difference among students in acquiring English.

Students' Views on Teaching English and Practices

Students viewed that English is understandable as explained in table 1. The students thought that English can be learned and is not very difficult to understand. This showed positive attitude and perception on English teaching and practice (Q1). The students would be easier to learn English if they had their own textbook. The textbook helped them to use it at home to do exercise and to repeat the materials that have been taught at school (Q2).

Table 1 students view on English teaching and practice (n=84).

Q1. English is very difficult to learn.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	21 (25%)	63 (75%)

Q2. It would be easier to learn English if I had my own textbook

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
72 (85 %)	12 (15%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Q3. I don't like reading English book because the pronunciation is difficult.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
6 (7 %)	8 (10%)	2 (3 %)	68 (80 %)	0 (0%)

Q4.I prefer teacher's pronunciation than the voice from tape recorder.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
70 (83%)	8 (10 %)	0 (0%)	6 (7%)	0 (0%)

Q5. If teacher ask in English, I will answer in Indonesian.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
31 (37%)	0 (0%)	0 (%)	53 (63%)	0 (0%)

Q6. I cheat my friend's work when there is a task.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
0 (0%)	8(10%)	0 (0%)	76 (90%)	0 (0%)

Q7. My teacher combines both English and Indonesian when he is teaching.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
41(49%)	26(31%)	0 (0%)	16(20%)	0 (0%)

Q8. I understand quicker if teacher uses a picture

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
9 (9%)	75 (91%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Q9. I can memorize word quickly if I see the physical object of the word

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
8 (8%)	71(85%)	1(2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Q10. I can learn English easily by using song.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
16 (20%)	68 (80%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Q11. I prefer the English schedule is in first and second hours.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
84 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Q12. English should be taught longer than now.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
10 (12%)	74(88%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The students did not feel annoy reading English even though the pronunciation of English word is different from the written text (Q3). The observation finding showed that students were enthusiastic to repeat the mispronounced word. In pronouncing word, the students like their teacher's voice compared to the voice from the English cassettes (Q4). This is due to the teachers voice is in common compared to the voice of native speakers in cassettes.

In terms of the teaching instruction, the students viewed that teachers should combine both English and Indonesian while teachings in order to help students to understand and grasp the lesson quickly (Q7). However when teachers asked in English, students tends to use Bahasa Indonesia to clarify and to answer the questions (Q5). The finding from the observation showed that students asked their teachers in Bahasa Indonesia if they did not understand what the teachers mean. If there is an assignment from the teachers, only some students agreed (10%) to cheat from their friends, while most of them prefer to finish by themselves (Q6).

The finding from Q8, Q9 and Q10 in table 1 above showed that students much more interested in learning English by using different methods including songs, picture,

and physical objects. Those different methods assisted students not only in memorizing of vocabulary but also in understanding English lesson. Students were very attracted by the use of variety of teaching media that improve their motivation to learn English. However, the observation described that teachers used very limited variation in teaching English.

The time allocation was seen short for the teaching English (Q11). The students were taught in 80 minutes in a week. It seemed that this schedule should be revised. The students have a preference to study English in the first or second period of the class hours (Q12). They were still fresh and it avoids students from feeling bored and tired.

What have been revealed above is that teachers were trying very hard to apply stages of language development as proposed by Piaget (1970). Teachers also proposed different types of activities in order to help students to interact with each others well both in classroom and outside classroom as suggested by Vygotsksy (1962), even though it was limited interactions among students. In addition, both teachers and students at this research were working as much as possible to maximize all learners learning styles as suggested by Garners (1972), even though with some limitation such as unavailability of written teaching materials, and lack of teacher knowledge on teaching methodology. Despite this challenge, teachers who have strong future vision may be able to lead learners to acquire language conveniently and easily (Abduh & Andrew, 2017). In addition, teachers working collaboratively as suggested by Rosmaladewi & Abduh (2017) can solve problems they face in their teaching and learning.

CONCLUSION

The research concluded that teachers used textbook as the only main resources for teaching. Teachers encountered also a number of challenges. The problems ranging from limited availability of teaching material, large class size makes it difficult to manage, to limited allocation of time and difficulty in finding appropriate teaching method. Students were much more interested in learning English using different method of teaching as well as the variety of teaching material and aids. It is suggested that the government pay much attention to the implementation of English as one of the local content in school. Teachers professional development programs are badly required especially improving teachers' knowledge in teaching method, and language development of children. Last but not least is that the government should conduct a comprehensive need analysis and action research to uncover the problems and the need of teaching English at primary level.

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Indonesian Version of Questionnaire

Appendix
Angket
Tujuan
    Angket ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui keinginan dan persepsi siswa sekolah dasar terhadap pembelajaran bahasa Inggris yang ada sekarang ini serta untuk mengetahui tantangan yang guru hadapi pada pembelajaran bahasa Inggris.

Pandangan siswa tentang pengajaran bahasa Inggris

No	Pernyataan (n = 84)				
Q1	Bahasa Inggris susah				
	Sangat setuju	Setuju	Neutral	Tidak Setuju	Sangat tidak setuju
	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	21 (25%)	63 (75%)
Q2	Saya mudah belajar bahasa Inggris kalau ada buku				
	Sangat setuju	Setuju	Neutral	Tidak Setuju	Sangat tidak setuju
	72 (85 %)	12 (15%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q3	Saya susah ucapkan kata bahasa Inggris.				

	Sangat setuju	Setuju	Neutral	Tidak Setuju	Sangat tidak setuju
	6 (7 %)	8 (10%)	2 (3 %)	68 (80 %)	0 (0%)
Q4	Saya suka dengar ucapan guru daripada dengar kaset				
	Sangat setuju	Setuju	Neutral	Tidak Setuju	Sangat tidak setuju
	70 (83%)	8 (10 %)	0 (0%)	6 (7%)	0 (0%)
Q5	Saya suka jawab dalam bahasa Indonesia kalau guru Tanya dengan bahasa Inggris.				
	Sangat setuju	Setuju	Neutral	Tidak Setuju	Sangat tidak setuju
	31 (37%)	0 (0%)	0 (%)	53 (63%)	0 (0%)
Q6	Saya menyontek punya teman jika ada tugas dari guru				
	Sangat setuju	Setuju	Neutral	Tidak Setuju	Sangat tidak setuju
	0 (0%)	8(10%)	0 (0%)	76 (90%)	0 (0%)
Q7	Guru saya menggunakan bahasa Inggris dan Bahasa Indonesia pada saat mengajar				
	Sangat setuju	Setuju	Neutral	Tidak Setuju	Sangat tidak setuju
	41(49%)	26(31%)	0 (0%)	16(20%)	0 (0%)
Q8	Saya lebih cepat memahami pelajaran jika guru menggunakan gambar				
	Sangat setuju	Setuju	Neutral	Tidak Setuju	Sangat tidak setuju
	9 (9%)	75 (91%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q9	Saya lebih bisa menghafal kata-kata jika melihat langsung objeknya				
	Sangat setuju	Setuju	Neutral	Tidak Setuju	Sangat tidak setuju
	8 (8%)	71(85%)	1(2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q10	Saya lebih cepat mempelajari bahasa Inggris dengan lagu				
	Sangat setuju	Setuju	Neutral	Tidak Setuju	Sangat tidak setuju
	16 (20%)	68 (80%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q11	Saya lebih suka kalau jam pelajaran bahasa Inggris pada jam I dan II				
	Sangat setuju	Setuju	Neutral	Tidak Setuju	Sangat tidak setuju
	84 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q12	Pelajaran Bahasa Inggris sebaiknya lebih lama.				
	Sangat setuju	Setuju	Neutral	Tidak Setuju	Sangat tidak setuju
	10(12%)	74(88%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Terima kasih atas waktu yang diluangkan untuk mengisi angket ini