



## **ENGLISH INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS FOR THE INTEGRATED ISLAMIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (SDIT)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The global trend to include English program in the early years of primary education in recent years has given ascend to the need for experienced teachers who was teaching English to young learners. There are kind of instructional materials for teaching English to the young learners. However, not all of instructional materials can be used effectively and appropriately in the classroom especially in an integrated Islamic school which is adopted and combined both government curriculum and integrated Islamic curriculum. Therefore, this research aims in investigating kind of instructional materials that generally used by the English teacher and the impacts of using instructional materials toward the learning environment. Further, the researcher also described the challenges of English teachers in adopting the instructional materials at integrated Islamic elementary school. To reach the aims, a descriptive qualitative study design is conducted towards the participants: seven English teachers from different integrated Islamic elementary schools in Central Java. The research employed questionnaire and interview to obtain the deeper data. The findings of the research are expected to provide an overview for English teacher in choosing the appropriate instructional materials with any considerations since they can motivate the young learners in learning English as a foreign language especially at the integrated Islamic elementary school.

**Keywords:** Instructional materials, English for young learners, integrated Islamic elementary school

### **INTRODUCTION**

Teaching English as a foreign language to young learners in the primary school has become a well-liked issue in this era. In Indonesia, teaching English to young learners is a part of curriculum based on Ministerial Decree No.22 Year 2006, dated May 23rd 2006, which states that English subject can be given to elementary students as a local content. According to Pinter (2011) young learners are categorized into three groups of age: (1) preschool; (2) primary school years; and (3) early adolescents. Teaching English to a young learner will be different with the adult. In learning English as foreign language, children learn and understand the language better by treating and applying it into actual activities (Munfangati, 2014). Teaching English as a foreign language to the young learners in primary level has important role because the English teachers have to understand much more about young learners include of choosing teaching methods and techniques also materials and media based on the students' ability, need and interest.

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Nowadays, many schools have implementing the Curriculum 2013 that is supported by regulations in Permendikbud No. 104 of 2014 about Learning. Curriculum 2013 provides opportunities for students to develop their potential into abilities that are progressively increasing on the attitudes (spiritual and social), knowledge, and skills needed for life and for community, nationhood, and contribute to the welfare of the people human (Permendikbud No. 104 of 2014 about Learning). However, there are some schools that also used the integrated Islamic curriculum. The integrated Islamic curriculum implement learning activities in Islamic religious subjects and general subjects to provide learning experiences that are useful for students. Integrated Islamic curriculum as one of the educational programs has a strategic role in shaping, building, fostering and directing students into complete human beings with character and positive personality, understanding themselves, skilled and able to work together with others. An integrated Islamic curriculum is always concerned in teaching and learning activities both the process and content of the material so that it is relevant to the behavior of students, so that learning activities can be easily understood, useful, and in accordance with the needs of students. Instructional materials become one of the important points in teaching and learning process. Materials facilitate and motivate students to get more experience, knowledge and interest in learning activity. Research proves that instructional materials highly facilitate learning and greatly draw learners' attention to the target language (Littlejohn, 2012; McDonough, Shaw & Mashura, 2013; Solak & Çakır, 2015; Tomlinson, 2012). Simply put, they have a considerable influence on foreign language learners and they play an extremely influential role in the EFL classes. To support this view, Richards (2001) asserts that instructional materials generally serve as the basis of much of the language input that learners receive and the language practice that occurs in the classroom. Thus, it is suggested that instructional materials need to be motivating and interesting.

There are some of instructional materials that can be used, such as: charts, poster, maps, globes, video tape recorder, cassette tape recorder, and etc. According to Okogbuo (2000), instructional materials in teaching could be classified into: (1) Visual material: such as textbooks, newspaper, picture, diagram, real object studies, etc.; (2) Audio materials: appeal to the sense of hearing, such as cassette tape recording, teachers voice, language laboratories etc.; (3) Audio-visual materials: appeal to both sense of hearing and sight, such as video recording, film trips etc.; (4) Two-dimensional instructional materials: include graphs, chart, posters, comics, cartoons, etc. Çakır (2015) conducted a study to determine the teachers' choices of instructional materials in teaching English at elementary schools. The results revealed that most of the teachers were reluctant to use many of the highly beneficial materials due to reasons including overcrowded classes, limited technological knowledge, lack of time for preparation, curricular time constraints, heavy work load, burnout etc.

This research is conducted with aims in investigating some points, such as: (1) Kinds of instructional materials generally used by the teachers in TEYL at integrated Islamic elementary school; (2) Impacts of using instructional materials for English language teaching at integrated Islamic elementary school; and (3) Problems/ challenges in implementing and using instructional materials and the way of English teachers solve the problems in teaching English to young learner at the integrated Islamic school.

## **METHOD**

In this research, the writer adopted descriptive qualitative design that is a method of research that attempt to describe and interpret the objects in accordance with reality. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) stated that qualitative research is descriptive which the data is collected in the form of words or pictures rather than numbers. Further, this research aimed to describe the kinds and impact of the English instructional materials used for young learners. The participants of the study consist of seven English teachers from some different Islamic elementary schools in area of Central Java, Indonesia which are used the basis of integrated Islamic curriculum.

The data of this research will be taken from the questionnaire and interviews. In questionnaire method, a researcher developed a form containing such questions pertinent to the study. In questionnaire method, researcher distributed such a link that can be accessed by the participants. The questionnaire is divided into four sections, focusing on respondents' background information, type of instructional materials used in teaching English, impact of the instructional materials and influential factors for teachers in implementing instructional materials for English language teaching at the integrated Islamic elementary school. In the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to assess the impact about using instructional materials in teaching English on a four point Likert scale, by indicating the extent to which they agreed with each statement using (1) SD= strongly disagree, (2) D= disagree, (3) A=agree and (4) SA= strongly agree. Moreover, the researcher also conducted informal interviews to engage in a dialogue with the English teachers to elicit their opinion in using instructional in the classroom, also to know the problem in implementing some instructional materials in teaching English to the young learners. The goals and objectives of the interviews data collection were to establish the rapport of trust, field notes, open-ended questions, and less structured style (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher divided the finding and result of the study into three parts. The first part would show the kind of instructional materials generally used by the English teachers. The second part included the impact of using instructional materials in English language teaching. The last part would describe the challenges faced by the English teacher in using the instructional materials in teaching English to young learners at the integrated Islamic schools followed by the way of teachers in facing the problems.

The first part of the findings described and discussed by the researcher as follows:

Table1. The type of instructional materials generally used by the English teacher

No.	Types of Instructional Materials	Use	Not Use
1.	Visual Materials		
	a. Textbooks	7	0
	b. Newspaper	0	7
	c. Picture	6	1
	d. Diagrams	1	6
	e. Journals	0	7
	f. Pamphlets	0	7
	g. Real object studies	4	3
2.	Audio Materials		
	a. Cassette tape-recorder	3	4
	b. Teacher's voice	7	0
	c. Language laboratories	0	7
3.	Audio-visual Materials		
	a. Film trips	3	4
	b. Video recording	5	2
4.	Two-dimensional Instructional Materials		
	a. Graphs	0	7
	b. Charts	2	5
	c. Posters	3	4
	d. Comics	0	7
	e. Cartoons	5	2

The table 1 above showed that there are some types of instructional materials generally used by the English teacher. The dominant type of instructional materials used by the seven English teachers is visual materials. However, the most dominant kind of visual materials used by the teacher is textbooks. Commercial textbooks together with ancillaries such as workbooks, cassettes, and teachers' guides are perhaps the commonest form of teaching materials in language teaching (Richards, 2001). By using a textbook in a program, it can guarantee that the students in different classes obtain similar content and therefore can be tested in the same way.

Most of the English teachers prefer to use the visual materials especially textbooks because it is easy to use. Further, the teachers have already adjusted it with the integrated Islamic curriculum. The other visual instructional materials also used by the teacher regarding to the combined curriculum. For example, in using pictures and real object studies to describe people (actor/ actress), the English teachers choose the Islamic picture which covering the genitals/ body. However, there is no English teacher who used journals and pamphlets in visual materials because some of the teachers think that it is a little bit difficult to deliver the English materials for the young learners using those items.

In addition, it is showed on the table that the seven English teachers also select the teacher's voice to be the other dominant kind of audio materials. For the English teachers, the best audio materials for teaching English to the young learners is by using teacher's voice because they always pay attention to what the teacher's do and say. However, the other audio materials can also be used in English language teaching like cassette tape-recorder and language laboratories. Unfortunately, not all of the integrated Islamic schools have those facilities yet to teach English as a foreign language to the young learners. It is align with the study conducted by Cakir (2015) that most of the teachers were unwilling to use many of the materials due to reasons including overcrowded classes and the limited technological knowledge.

The second part of findings will describe based on the table below:

Table 2 : The Percentage impact of using Instructional Materials in teaching English to young learners

No.	The Impact of Using Instructional Materials	SD	D	A	SA
1.	Gain and hold the attention of learners	0 0%	1 14,3%	5 71,4%	1 14,3%
2.	Provide visual aspects to the learning process	0 0%	0 0%	6 85,7%	1 14,3%
3.	Focus attention of learners	0 0%	1 14,3%	2 28,6%	4 57,1%
4.	Facilitates the students and classroom activity	0 0%	2 28,6%	2 28,6%	3 42,9%
5.	Provide a large number of experience for the learners	0 0%	2 28,6%	3 42,9%	2 28,6%
6.	Stimulate the learners	0 0%	0 0%	6 85,7%	1 14,3%

Heinich, et al (2001) mentioned that instructional materials can generally make the teaching process easier. There are six impacts of using instructional materials in teaching English as a foreign language to the young learners. According to table above, there are five English teachers who agree that the instructional materials can help to get young learner's attention. Cunningsworth (1995) stated that instructional material may become a source of activities for learner practice and communicative interaction.

Dudley-Evans & St. John (1998) mentioned one of the functions of instructional materials was as a source of language that may become the learning support. Table 2

showed that there are six English teachers who agree that the instructional materials provide visual aspects to the learning process. It is in line to the first finding of this research that the most dominant type of instructional materials generally used by the English teachers is the visual materials. Materials can be selected to illustrate many aspects of the target culture, including culturally based practices and beliefs and both linguistic and nonlinguistic behavior (Phillips and Shettleworth 1978; Clarke 1989; Peacock 1997).

Further, there are four English teachers who strongly agree that the instructional materials can be the focus attention of learners. Tomlinson (2012) explained that materials can be instructional. It was meant that the materials guided the learner in practicing the language. Moreover, the materials may relate more directly to learners' needs and consequently provide a link between the classroom and students' needs in the real world. The table above also showed that there are three English teachers who agree that the instructional materials facilitate the students and classroom activity. Cunningsworth (1995) stated that the role of instructional materials was as a reference source for learners on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and so on.

In addition, there are two English teachers who strongly agree that the instructional materials can provide a large number of experiences for the learners. Tomlinson (2012) explained that instructional materials can be experiential, meant that instructional materials provided the learners with experience of the language in use. However, there are also two English teachers disagree to the statement that the instructional materials can provide experiences for the learners. Cunningsworth (1995) stated that the other function of instructional materials can be a support for less experienced teachers, so that the teachers and learners may experience together during teaching learning process.

The last impact based on the table 2 showed that there are six English teachers who agree that the instructional materials can give stimulant to the young learners in English language teaching. It is supported by Cunningsworth (1995) and Dudley-Evans & St. John (1998) who stated that the role and function of the instructional materials was also as a source of stimulation and ideas for classroom activities so that can motivate the learners in learning the language. Thus, there are no English teachers who disagree that the instructional can stimulate the young learners.

The last part of findings described about the challenges of the English teachers in implementing the English instructional materials at the integrated Islamic schools. Generally, the challenges come from the students who have less interest on English subject and less understanding to the certain materials. Moreover, the other challenges come when the teaching materials are difficult to be delivered and explained to the young learners. Further, the classroom condition also gives impact to the implementation of the instructional materials.

However, in order to overcome the challenges and problems in implementing the instructional materials at the classroom, some English teachers have prepared a special preparation. The way how the English teachers cope the challenges may include:

1. Make the study contract for both teacher and students
2. Give special attention to the students who have different understanding to others
3. Motivate the students by inserting the media
4. Use the practical learning to get students more understand
5. Give negative points that should be redeem with some questions about Islamic items (e.g. The name of Nabi)

## **CONCLUSION**

In closing, this study indicated that there are kind of instructional materials generally used by the English teacher in teaching English to the young learners at the integrated Islamic schools. The visual materials include: textbooks, pictures, diagrams, and the real object studies. The audio materials include cassette tape-recorder and teacher's voice. The audio-visual materials include film trips and video recording. The two-dimensional

instructional materials include charts, posters and cartoons. However, the most dominant type that generally used by the English teacher is the visual materials. In implementing the instructional materials, the teachers need to prepare and adjust the materials to the integrated Islamic curriculum which is inserting Islamic items and other Islamic sources.

Further, there are some impacts of using instructional materials in teaching English to the young learners that can be considered by the English teachers such as gain students' focus and attention, facilitate and stimulate the learners, also provide a visual aspect to give the students many experiences in learning. However, the participants face some challenges in implementing the instructional materials at the integrated Islamic school, such as the less understanding and motivation of the young learners towards English subject, the less facilitation and the difficult materials for the young learners. It will be more challenging when the teachers should control the classroom.

In order to face the challenges, some English teachers have made some preparations, such as making study contract; inserting media; and giving special attention. These findings suggest that it is necessary to create an interactive and effective learning environment for young learners by providing kinds of instructional materials. It is in line with the impact of using instructional materials for teaching English to young learners that instructional materials provide a large number of experience, motivation and stimulation for the learners. If possible, learners should be able to access language learning materials easily. As for the teachers at the integrated Islamic elementary school, it is crucial to know how to utilize materials at hand meaningfully and responsibly. Rather, they need to consistently vary type of materials; use correct, natural and Standard English; and adapt and develop appropriate materials relevant to the Islamic point of view.

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