

# TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHING ENGLISH FOR YOUNG LEARNERS AND THE IMPLEMENTATION IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN JEMBRANA SUB-DISTRICT

N. P. R. Listyariani<sup>1</sup>, L. P. Artini<sup>1</sup>, N. N. Padmadewi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>123</sup>English Language Education, Post Graduate Program, Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha, Singaraja  
e-mail: [malistya927@yahoo.com](mailto:malistya927@yahoo.com), [putu.artini@undiksha.ac.id](mailto:putu.artini@undiksha.ac.id), [nyoman.padmawati@undiksha.ac.id](mailto:nyoman.padmawati@undiksha.ac.id)

Teaching English for Young Learners has certain principles that need to be followed, while in fact its implementation in public primary schools does not seem to follow those principles. This research aimed at investigating teachers' perception of teaching English for young learners and its implementation in public primary schools in Jembrana subdistrict. The research was also used to explore the problems which are encountered by teachers in teaching English in the classroom. This study involved 3 English teachers of Public Elementary Schools in Jembrana subdistrict. The data were collected through questionnaire, rating scales, observation sheets, and interviews guide. The research design was embedded mixed method design with qualitative dominant. The data were analyzed through descriptive qualitative. The results showed that teachers gave strongly positive perceptions about TEYL. Meanwhile, the activities which occurred in the learning process were mostly deal with the component of "Teaching Through Activities" with average range was 10.33. This range means that the component of teaching through activities was very highly implemented among the nine components. The other components were rarely evident during the observation. Based on the result of interview, the main problems which were encountered by the teachers are the difficulty to teach pronunciation to the students, limited learning sources, limited time for preparing lesson, and lack of various learning activities. Thus, this study suggests the government or other policy makers to provide English teachers with some kinds of professional development on practical guidance of TEYL and sufficient learning sources as well.

**Keywords:** *teachers' perceptions, Implementation, TEYL, Public primary schools.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In this globalization era, English has become everyone's concern regarding to its usefulness in various aspects. In Indonesia itself, English has taken its role in the society. Coleman (2010) mentions some roles of English, such as increasing people's employability, allowing international cooperation and collaboration, giving a chance to access research and information, and enabling the international mobility of tourists, workers, or students.

Huda (2000) states five factors that made English as an International language, those are: (1) its internal linguistic features, (2) the large number of English speakers, (3) the wide geographical spread of where it is used, (4) its importance in fields such as politics, international diplomacy, economics and business, science and technology, and culture, and (5) the use of English by countries which currently dominate world affairs economically, politically, and culturally. Those factors are considered to be valid reasons for the special status of English in Indonesia.

By considering to various functions and benefits which are brought by English language, therefore it is considered very important to learn it. Learning English as early as possible can give the best attainment. It is in line with Piaget's child developmental theory that stated the main idea is children are active learners and thinkers. By teaching English to young learners as early as possible can make them achieving better. However, by the change of national curriculum in Indonesia into Curriculum 2013, English subject was removed from elementary school curriculum.

Although the government had removed English subject for elementary schools, but there are some regencies in Bali that still inserts English as a subject in elementary school. The possible reasons for this are people especially in Bali consider English is important to ease

them in finding employment especially in tourism area since Bali becomes tourism destination and to enable people in competing in this globalization era. One of regencies in Bali that still provides English for students is Jembrana regency. There are few elementary schools that still give English to students according to school management's policy. This policy is related with special demands from parents to start introducing English to children since earlier or community needs in which the students live in tourism area that require them to be able to speak English. Since English subject had been removed from the curriculum, it causes there is no any national standard (in terms of instructional sets) for English in primary schools.

The absence of English subject in national curriculum makes some public primary schools that still offer English to their students make their own policy based on each school management. The schools that still have English subject unlikely employ teachers who have sufficient background knowledge about English. Most teachers who are responsible to teach English in some primary schools seem do not have special qualification to teach English for young learners. In Jembrana itself, most teachers who teach in primary schools do not have English educational background. Whereas as a matter of fact, young learners have special requirements for English learning because they have special characteristics and needs. Let us take one school as an example in Jembrana sub-district. This school still provides English for the students since the school principal wants to prepare the students for the future learning in junior high school. Since this school does not have a teacher with English educational background, then the principal gave responsibility to teach English to homeroom teachers. The learning instructional (syllabus and lesson plan) were downloaded from the internet without being adjusted with students' needs. As the result, students' learning achievement in English may not maximal. Actually when teachers are aware of young learners' characteristics and needs, they can construct good learning instructions and implement it well in the classroom; therefore the students can develop their competency maximally. These phenomena encouraged the researcher to conduct a study to investigate teachers' perception about teaching English and its implementation in public primary schools in Jembrana sub-district, and the problems encountered by teachers in teaching English in the classrooms.

Teaching English for children has some principles that need to be followed since young learners have certain characteristics. Young children are known as curious creature. They are actively creating ideas and constructing their knowledge, not limited only receiving knowledge from teachers or parents (Piaget, 1983 as cited in Lefa, 2014). From Piaget's child developmental stages theory, a very important idea is a child as an active learner and thinker (Cameron, 2001). Since young learners need to be motivated to learn, Moon (2003) as mentioned in Çakir (2004) proposed the ways young learners learn a foreign language are:

- a. They can learn when they are motivated. Giving motivation can make them learn faster and it is each teacher's style in motivating someone.
- b. They learn the best by listening and repeating.
- c. Children learn by imitating the teacher who becomes the model.
- d. Children should engage in the classroom activities in an atmosphere of trust and acceptance, through a variety of interesting and fun activities that they see the purpose

Medwell et.al. (2009) mentioned that the most complex and important knowledge that children must obtain is knowledge about how to create and arrange their skills and understanding about the four language skills effectively. Medwell et.al. (2009) proposed that all this knowledge is part of primary English.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

The research design of this study was mixed method design that employed embedded mixed method of data collection and analysis. The type of mixed method which was used in this study was embedded mixed method designs with qualitative dominant. In this research, the researcher combined one dataset with the other to make them supporting each other. The researcher was embedding a secondary form of data within a larger study having a different form of data as the primary database, and the secondary database provided a supporting role

in this study (Cresswell, 2012). There were two types of data, namely quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data were used to answer question about teachers' perceptions of teaching English for young learners in Jembrana sub-district. Qualitative data were used to answer questions about the implementation of teaching English for young learners in public primary schools in Jembrana sub-district and the problems which encountered by the teachers during the teaching and learning process.

Subject of this study was English teachers in public primary schools in Jembrana sub-district. Due to the limited time, so the researcher only used one district in this research. This study employed three primary public schools in Jembrana sub-district that still provided English subject for the students. There are 33 public elementary schools in Jembrana sub-district and there are only 7 schools that still provide English subject for students grade 4 until 6. Because the limitation of time, 3 of 7 schools were used in this study by using purposive sampling technique based on regularity of time in teaching English in a week. All participants of this study were graduated from primary teacher education program and did not have English educational background.

Object of this study was teachers' perception about teaching English in primary schools and their efforts in implementing the principles of English for young learners pedagogy in public primary schools in Jembrana regency, and the problems which were faced by the teachers in teaching English.

In the procedure of data collection, the views of participants toward English learning in primary schools were quantified which later the data collection were described qualitatively. After analyzing the data, then the gathered information was used to conduct qualitative research phase. In the quantitative phase there was the analysis of the result of questionnaire. Meanwhile, in the qualitative phase there were the result of observation and interview.

The researcher used some instruments to collect the data, namely the researcher herself, questionnaire, rating scales, observation sheet, and interview guide. The main instrument in this research is the researcher herself. In this study, the researcher observes, takes notes, talks to people in the interviews, etc. Questionnaire was employed to get information of teachers' perception about teaching English in public primary schools in Jembrana regency. The amount of the statements on the questionnaire were 43 statements. The questionnaire used five Likert scale in which 5 meant strongly agree, 4 meant agree, 3 meant moderately agree, 2 meant disagree, and 1 meant strongly disagree. To determine the content validity, the questionnaire was judged by two expert judges in which one judge was expertized in English Language Teaching and another judge was expertized in English Pedagogy. Scales

Rating scales were employed to get information about the kinds of instructional media which were implemented in English classroom. In this study, the theory which was used to identify the kinds of instructional was the one proposed by Harmer (2007). Rating scales also used Likert scale in which 4 meant always, 3 meant often, 2 meant sometimes, and 1 meant never. Observation sheet was used to obtain information about the implementation of TEYL and situation in the classroom. The observation here included kinds of instructional media which were used by the teachers and how the teachers implemented TEYL in public primary schools in Jembrana sub-district. Interview guide was also used to get deeper information that needs to be clarified to the teachers, especially the information about the problems which were encountered by the teachers in implementing TEYL and the relation of teacher's perception about TEYL with the implementation of TEYL in public primary schools in Jembrana sub-district. The use of interview guide assisted the researcher to focus on a certain topic on an interview.

This study gathered data that were analyzed by using two methods namely quantitative and qualitative analysis. The analysis of questionnaire was done by using quantitative analysis, meanwhile the analysis of the result of observation sheet and interview were done by using qualitative analysis namely interactive analysis model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994). The steps of quantitative data analysis were done as follows.

1. Data from the questionnaire were collected and classified.

2. The responses from the respondents were calculated to get the average scores of each indicator and component.
3. The results of the data were shown on the table.
4. The results of the data were categorized according to the qualification level of perception. In this study, the qualification level proposed by Koyan (2012) was used.

Meanwhile to analyze the qualitative data, interactive analysis model which was proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994) was implemented in this study. There were 4 steps in this model, such as data collection, data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusion or verification. Interactive data analysis by Milles and Huberman was used in this study. the data analysis was done interactively; which means that the stages were done continuously. In displaying the data, the researcher might go back to the data collection stage until all necessary data were collected. In the conclusion stage, the researcher might go back to the data reduction when unwanted data were collected. Or when the researcher arrived to the conclusion, she might go back to the data collection when the result of data analysis was insufficient to answer the research questions. Therefore, each stage was related each other. In the data collection, the researcher obtained the data from observation sheets and interview results. In the beginning, the researcher asked for permission to the headmasters and English teachers to conduct the research in 3 public elementary schools in Jembrana regency. After getting the permission, the researcher did observations in the classroom activities for English subject. The observation sheets were used in the observation activities. Rating scales were given to the teachers to be filled based on instructional media that they used in the classroom. Afterward, interview was conducted to follow up the result of observation and rating scales.

After collecting the data, they were analyzed and the needed data were chosen. The data reduction was done to avoid unnecessary data, since the gathered data sometimes abundant. After being reduced, then the data were organized and analyzed. After sorting process had finished, the data were displayed. The results of the data were cross-checked comparing to one another to get the result of the data.

Drawing a conclusion was done after all data had been analyzed and the result of analysis had been collected. Then the conclusion was drawn. The very last stage was verification of trustworthiness. When the all process was repeated and the data were saturated, it indicated that the result was trusted. The result of analysis including teachers' perception about TEYL in public primary schools which was collected from the analysis of questionnaire, how the teachers implemented TEYL in public primary schools that was obtained from the analysis of observation sheet, and the problems which were encountered during the teaching of English in public primary schools that could be seen through the result of interview.

### **3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Based on the summary of the questionnaire result, the most found category of TEYL components is strong and it is followed by category of neutral. From the first component of TEYL, the teachers have strong perceptions that young learners have a great curiosity. They strongly agree that students in young age possess a great curiosity. The teachers also have strong perceptions toward the second component which says that young learners actively construct meaning from their experiences since the average range of perceptions is 3.6675. The third component which is young learners have short attention span and easily to get bored gets strong perceptions from the teachers. They strongly agree with this concept. As the previous component, the next component which states young learners focus on the immediate here and now context situation also gets strong perceptions from the teachers. Meanwhile, teaching through visuals and teaching in context are the components that get neutral perceptions from the teachers. It means that the teachers are in the middle position. On one side, it does not mean they did not agree with these concepts, but on the other side they also do not really agree with the concepts. Next, the teachers strongly agree with the components of teaching through activities and providing enjoyable learning environment, meanwhile they have neutral perception about impacts on students' achievement in many areas.

In investigating the implementation of TEYL principles in public primary schools, the findings are structured into the media used and the activities in the classrooms. To explore the media which were often used by the subjects, the researcher used rating scales while observation sheet was applied to investigate activities in EFL classrooms.

The media that got similar frequency of the usage by the 3 teachers, such as the students themselves, realia, and pictures. Meanwhile, OHP and flipcharts were never used by the three teachers in the classroom. If we look at the concept of TEYL that English should be taught by using various media that can engage students' interest, it can be said that the subjects of this study needs to add or develop the media that they applied in the classrooms.

To investigate learning activities which were conducted by the subjects, the researcher used observation sheet to observe the teaching and learning activities in EFL classrooms. The observations were conducted 3 times in which the data was considered saturated. After being analyzed, the component of TEYL that got the biggest score of average frequency of implementation is "Teaching through Activities". It indicates that teachers in Jembrana regency tend to involve various activities in the teaching and learning process. Meanwhile, the component of "Young Learners Have Great Curiosity" got the lowest score of average frequency. This result displayed that the lowest concept of TEYL which was possessed by teachers in Jembrana regency was "Young Learners Have Great Curiosity".

Based on the categorization of teachers' perception about TEYL in primary schools and categorization for frequency of implementation of TEYL, the summary of the relation between teachers' perception and its implementation in the teaching and learning process was made. The data showed that there were a huge gap between perceptions and implementation of the component "Young Learners Have a Great Curiosity". The categorization of perceptions is strong, but the implementation is very low. The component "Teaching in context" also gets a gap between perceptions and its implementation. The perceptions of teaching in context is neutral, meanwhile its implementation is very low. The same thing also happened on providing enjoyable learning environment. The category of perceptions is strong, but its implementation is very low.

From the relation between teachers' perceptions and the implementation of TEYL in the classroom, it was found that there are three inconsistent components, such as young learners have a great curiosity, between perceptions and its implementation has relation of no consistency. The perceptions about the component of "Teaching in Context" and its implementation has relation lack of consistency, and the component "Providing Enjoyable Learning Environment" has relation no consistency between the perceptions and its implementation.

Regarding to the result of the questionnaire and the observation sheet, there might be inconsistency between the concepts of TEYL which were possessed by the teacher and the implementation in the classroom. On one hand, the teacher might have a good understanding about the concept of TEYL, but the implementation is inappropriate with the concept. On the other hand, the teacher might not realize about the concept of TEYL but actually she/he had implemented it. From the relations between teachers' perceptions and implementations, the researcher could predict the problems that might happen. From the component "Young learners have a great curiosity" which has no consistency between the perception and the implementation, the predicted problem that happened is the teachers might use limited types of activities in the learning process which does not satisfy students' curiosity. in the component "Teaching in context" which has lack of consistency between the perception and the implementation, the predicted problem is the teachers might not provide the students with contextual teaching. From the inconsistency between the perception and the implementation of the component "Providing enjoyable learning environment", the predicted problem is the teachers, realize it or not might not be able to create enjoyable learning environment for the students. There were various factors that made the students couldn't enjoy the learning activity which caused disturbance in the learning process. While the rest components might do not have serious problems since the relation between the perception and the implementation is consistent.

To explore the problems which were encountered by the teachers in TEYL in primary schools, the interview guidance was used. According to the result of interview, it was found the problems which were often faced in teaching English in primary schools according to the teachers' opinion. The results could be seen on the table as follows.

No.	Problems from Teacher 1
1	Teaching pronunciation was become T1's problem since the written words of English and the pronunciation were different.
2	There were no sufficient English books that could be used. The school did not provide the students with English textbooks. They only used LKS which tend to have limited materials.
3	The teacher did not have enough time to prepare the variation of learning media that could catch the students' interest.

Table 1. The Problems Encountered by T1 in Teaching English

No	Problems from Teacher 2
1	The teacher felt difficult to use bilingual in teaching English, since she did not master English speaking well. Therefore, sometimes she pronounced some English words wrong.
2	The visual media which was available only whiteboard. The teacher never used LCD to show video in teaching because there was only 1 LCD available at school and it was only used for teacher meetings.
3	The teacher rarely used reward as reinforcement for the students because it would make the students became spoiled. They always expected a reward everytime the teacher asked them to do something in English subject.
4	There were no textbooks for English subject since English only became an extracurricular subject. They only used LKS to study.
5	Teaching pronunciation and writing became the teacher's problems since English written words were different with the pronunciation. She needed extra time to teach pronunciation and writing with correct spelling.

Table 2. The Problems Encountered by T2 in Teaching English

No	Problems from Teacher 3
1	The students studied in the library because the classroom was still in renovation process. It made the teacher couldn't provide the students with various learning activities since the library was narrow that made them impossible to move freely.
2	Insufficient learning sources for the teacher and students. They only used LKS in studying.
3	It was difficult to make the students could pronounce words correctly and writing with correct spelling. They should be given example of pronunciation repeatedly.
4	Since the studying place did not support for the teacher to use LCD or audio speaker, therefore she did not use video in the learning process during the observations.

Table 3. The Problems Encountered by T3 in Teaching English

The study which is entitled Teachers' Perceptions of Teaching English for Young Learners in Public Primary Schools in Jembrana regency was conducted in three public primary schools in Jembrana regency. There were three subjects involved in this study. All of them were homeroom teachers of grade 4 who do not have English educational background. There were three research problems that the researcher tried to answer. The first question was about investigating teachers' perceptions of TEYL in public primary schools, the second was observing the implementation of TEYL in the classrooms in public primary schools, and the last was investigating the problems which are encountered by the teachers.

To answer research question number one, the researcher used questionnaire. After analyzing the result of questionnaire, it was found that the subjects mostly have strong

perceptions of teaching English for young learners. The data showed that from nine components of TEYL which were used in this study, six of them got category strong which indicates that teachers strongly agree with the six components. Meanwhile the rest concepts got category neutral which indicates that the teachers have neutral perceptions about TEYL. They did not disagree with the concepts, but at the same time they did not really agree.

By having strong perceptions it means the teachers understand the basic concepts of TEYL, although the subjects do not have English language teaching educational background. Besides, they also realized the importance of English language learning since early age. Teachers' perception about the importance of English for young learners itself becomes an important thing that can support the process of teaching and learning. It was in accordance with the result of the study which was conducted by Damar, Gursoy & Korkmaz (2013) as cited in Oktaviani & Fauzan (2017). The result of the study showed that EFL teacher trainers prefer language education to start at the first stage of primary school and even earlier during pre-school. Supriyanti (2012) as cited in Oktaviani & Fauzan (2017) through her study showed the reasons of the importance English to be learned since early age, such as in the relation with the widespread assumption that the children are better than adults in learning a new language, the fact that economic globalization demands English in the form of workforce who speak English, and the parents' enthusiasm to provide their children with English learning in order to have social and economic benefits.

By having a good understanding about learning English since early age, it is expected that the teachers will teach English more enthusiastic and try to be a good model and learning source for the students. To observe the implementation of English language teaching in the classroom, the researcher used observation sheet and rating scales to know instructional media that the teachers used in teaching English.

The result of observation sheet showed that the average frequency of the implementation of the concept that young learners have a great curiosity is 0.33. The category of the implementation is very low, meanwhile the perception of this concept is strong. In order to clarify the result of analysis, the researcher conducted interviews to the teachers.

From the result of interview, it was found that the teachers found difficulties in choosing and developing activities in the classroom. It is influenced by the lack of English knowledge that they have since they do not have English educational background. It causes the teachers feel not ready to teach English subject.

The teachers' perception of the concept of TEYL that states teaching in context was neutral; meanwhile the implementation of the concept is very low. The reason of this is actually still related with the previous result of interview, in which the teachers faced difficulties in choosing and developing learning activities.

According to the result of the interview, generally the teachers do not have enough time to prepare songs and games. While T3 did not use them because the space to study did not allow them to move freely to play games.

During the observations, the teachers also seldom to use visual media other than boards. Meanwhile, the result of the questionnaire shows that they agree with the use of visual media in English subject.

The result of interview showed that the teachers do not have sufficient time to prepare video, the availability of media in the school and because of the place to study does not allow the teacher to use video in the teaching and learning process.

Regarding to the problems which are often encountered by the teachers in teaching English for young learners, it is found the most common problems are teaching pronunciation to the students and the availability of teaching media. It is difficult for the teachers to make the students can pronounce English words correctly. The teachers must practice the students many times in pronunciation to make them familiar with the words. Besides, writing also becomes the problem since the spoken form of English words is different with the spelling. It needs the students' efforts to practice pronunciation and writing diligently.

The study also found that there was a mismatch between teachers' perceptions about teaching English for young learners and problems that the teachers encountered. The difficulty to teach pronunciation was caused by insufficient knowledge possessed by the teachers which

made the teachers taught the wrong pronunciation in some words to the students. Limited learning sources caused limited materials were taught to the students, or there was no development of teaching materials by the teachers. Limited time for preparing lesson and lack of various learning activities made the teachers only repeated the same activities in each meeting such as reading a text in LKS, answering questions, doing translation, and reading conversations in LKS. The lack of enjoyable learning activities caused the students easily to get bored especially those who sat at the back and they did not focus to the learning activities.

#### 4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

From the analysis that had been done in chapter 4, the conclusion could be drawn as follows. The most found category of TEYL components is strong and it is followed by category of neutral. It indicates that the teachers had strong perceptions toward the components of TEYL. The teachers mostly had strong category of perception on TEYL components such as "Young learners have a great curiosity", "Young learners actively construct meaning from their experiences", "Teaching through visuals", "Teaching in context", and "Impact on students' achievement in many areas". Meanwhile, the teachers had neutral perception about TEYL concepts such as "Young learners have a quite short attention span and easily to get bored", "Young learners focus on the immediate here and now context situation", "Teaching through activities", and "Providing enjoyable learning environment". To make the concept that they have possessed becomes meaningful, it should be implemented well in the classroom.

In implementing TEYL, it was found that between the teachers' perceptions and the implementation was not always consistent. On one hand, the teachers might have a good understanding about the concept of TEYL, but they did not implement it well in the classroom. On the other hand, the teachers might not realize about the concept of TEYL, but actually they had implemented it in the classroom. From the result of analysis, it was found that the teachers only got 3 consistencies between the perceptions and the implementation. Those were the components of "Young learners actively construct meaning from their experiences", "Young learners have a quite short attention span and easily to get bored", and "Teaching through activities". Meanwhile there was one inconsistency occurred in the concept of providing enjoyable learning environment. According to the result of interview guidance, the teachers stated the problems that were encountered in teaching English in primary schools were mostly on the availability of learning sources (textbooks) which were limited. It was considered enough only used LKS as learning source for the students. Another problem which was encountered by all teachers was in teaching pronunciation and writing English words, since written English words were different with the pronunciation. The teacher should practice pronunciation and writing often to make the students were skillful. The interview results also discovered that teachers found difficulty in developing learning activities. The activities more often referred to LKS such as doing tasks on LKS.

After getting the results of the study, it is known that teachers' perceptions about TEYL can give influence toward its implementation in the classrooms. Besides, English teachers in public primary schools especially in Jembrana regency still find difficulties in teaching English. The implications of this research toward Educational field, such as make English teachers in public primary schools have strongly positive perceptions to English and willing to teach English well by considering the components of TEYL. The suggestions are also given to the government or other policy makers to provide English teachers with some kinds of professional development on practical guidance of TEYL and sufficient learning sources as well.

After conducting this study, the researcher found many important things that were not realized previously that teaching English for young learners was not easy as it seems. There were many things that should be noticed. Not only in the matter of the concept, has the implementation had an important role in order to be able to provide the students with meaningful learning. The use of learning media, the availability of learning sources, and the teachers' knowledge about English are some key factors that can give big influences toward the learning achievement. Therefore, it is suggested to the policy makers in school educational practice in general or English language teaching in particular in Indonesia to follow up this research with some kinds of professional development on practical guidance for the teachers



to implement the values of TEYL as TEYL becomes the key factor to grow English language as early as possible to the students. It is also suggested to the English teachers to enrich knowledge about English language and strategies to teach English for primary school students. They can get information from the internet or English books.

Since this research is limited on the teachers' perception about TEYL, its implementation and the problems which are encountered in implementing TEYL in primary schools in Jembrana regency, therefore it is suggested for the future study to conduct a related research by developing the problems or issues which are related with TEYL in the daily life.

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