

Teachers' Perception in Developing Wetlands-Based Materials for English for Young Learners Classrooms

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ABSTRACT

In Indonesia, English becomes a compulsory subject to be taught in junior and senior high school; whereas, it is regulated by the government that English is positioned as local content in primary schools. However, several primary schools in Indonesia, particularly in South Kalimantan, still hold English as their compulsory subject. The teachers in some primary schools, especially in wetland areas, have limited access to the information on teaching English for young learners (EYL) for lacking the materials regarding the local content, which is wetlands-based materials. Concerning the importance of achieving the teaching and learning goals; henceforth, this study is intended to investigate the teachers' perception on how to develop materials related to local content, which is focused on wetlands, to teach English for students at young ages. A descriptive qualitative design is chosen in the study since it is aimed at investigating the teachers' perception toward the material development. This study uses questionnaires and interviews to gain data from primary school teachers who teach English in South Kalimantan. According to the findings, understanding of wetlands in South Kalimantan should be taught in English classes from an early age. Furthermore, a variety of activities must be provided to encourage young learners to learn about wetlands since topics like biodiversity and wetlands society are considered critical for young students to understand. To summarize, educational institutions, particularly primary schools, should increase their efforts to prepare pupils for a long-term career in environmental protection.

Keywords: Teachers' Perception, Wetlands-based Materials, EYL Classrooms

1. INTRODUCTION

Understanding and enhancing educational processes requires an understanding of teachers' ideas, behaviours, and attitudes. They influence motivation and achievement in students' learning environments, and they are intrinsically tied to teachers' techniques for dealing with obstacles in their professional lives as well as their overall well-being. They are also predicted to reduce the negative effects of job-related policies on student learning, such as changes in teacher education or professional development curriculum. Many studies have found that certain aspects of teaching are associated to effective classroom learning and student results [1], [2]. Students' achievement has been found to be aided by close supervision, appropriate pacing, and classroom management, as well as clarity of presentation, well-structured lectures, and helpful and positive comments. This is not enough, though; in order to be effective, the teacher must present learning opportunities that the student recognizes and utilizes. Motivation, objectives, and outcomes must all be considered. As a result, the

framework of instructional quality is broader than the above-mentioned direct instruction. What teachers bring to the classroom, in turn, affects instructional techniques. Professional competence is seen as a critical component of classroom and school operations [3]-[5]. To study this concept is produced by Peterson et al., a number of scholars have used analyses of the influence of constructivist vs "reception/direct transmission" notions on teaching and learning [6].

However, from the perspective of educational policy, it is even more critical to consider the impact of professional background factors on teachers' beliefs, practices, and attitudes, such as type of training, certification, and professional development, subject taught, employment status (part-time versus full-time), and tenure length. It's worth noting that different causal interpretations can be applied to any of these interactions. Professional development events, for example, may alter ideas and attitudes, although participation in such activities may be the result of pre-existing beliefs. Professors do not just instruct students in the classroom,

where they are often isolated from other classes and teachers. Professional activities on the school level, such as working in groups, developing professional learning communities, participating in school growth, and analyzing and improving working conditions, are all included in a modern vision of teaching [7]. These activities shape the learning environment at the school level, i.e. the school climate, ethos, and culture, and so influence student learning both directly and indirectly (through classroom-level procedures). As a result, adequate classroom environments and materials are critical in meeting the needs of pupils.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Perception about Teaching and Learning Nature

Two sorts of views about the nature of teaching and learning are "direct transmission beliefs about learning and instruction" and "constructivist ideas about learning and instruction. These views are well-supported in educational research, at least in Western countries, and have also gained traction elsewhere (e.g. [8]). A teacher's duty, according to the direct transmission model of student learning, is to impart knowledge in a clear and organised manner, to explain right solutions, to present students clear and solvable tasks, and to maintain calm and focus in the classroom. A constructivist perspective, on the other hand, sees pupils as active participants in the process of learning rather than as passive receivers of information. This school of thought emphasizes fostering student inquiry, preferring to offer students the opportunity to create their own solutions to problems and allowing them to participate actively in instructional activities. The development of thinking and reasoning processes is prioritized over the acquisition of specific knowledge [9]. It's critical to know the difference between beliefs and practices. Pedagogical and cultural traditions influence both behaviours and perceptions. They represent several aspects of the instructional context for student learning, all of which are interconnected.

2.2. Teaching English to Young Learners in Wetlands Context

It's crucial to comprehend the reader's interaction with the text, as well as the reader's interaction with the writer. The majority of individuals believe that reading is about deriving meaning from the text. The reader, on the other hand, contributes meaning to the text and engages with the meaning already present. Making connections from the text to our own experience and background knowledge is a common way for us to comprehend material. Schema is a term used to describe this baseline knowledge. When children read a story about wetlands, for example, they bring their knowledge or schema of

animals that live in wetlands to the text, making it easier for them to understand the story. Young EFL students require a variety of skills to comprehend and generate various texts. Modelling the skills and methods that pupils need to employ is one way to help young learners improve their reading and writing abilities. The teacher models how to read smoothly and expressively in a read-aloud while simultaneously showing interest and excitement for reading. Predicting what happens in the text; and identifying text structures, such as the beginning, middle, and finish of stories or texts, are all abilities that the instructor can model (Shin, 2017). Teachers might provide simple writing exercises such as tracing or copying words and sentences, unscrambling words and sentences, or gap-filling activities to help lower-level children acquire the foundations of writing in English.

3. METHODOLOGY

This empirical study used a qualitative research method to investigate instructors' perspectives on educating young learners utilizing wetlands materials. Qualitative research involves questionnaire description result and interview by describing events and persons in detail. Qualitative research investigates phenomena and use semi-structured methods such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, and participant observation, as well as more flexible instruments and an iterative approach of eliciting and categorizing replies to questions. Kitzinger [10] stated that questions can be used to develop people's perspectives, experiences, and feelings through conversation and interaction processes. The subjects of this study were ten English teachers from different school backgrounds; elementary and junior high school teachers located in wetlands areas in Banjarmasin. The data were gathered using Likert-scale questionnaire and semi-structured interview related to the teachers' perception on teaching English using wetlands materials to young learners.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Perception about the Purpose of Teaching Wetlands for Young Learners

Investigating South Kalimantan teacher's perception about the aim of teaching English using wetlands material for early-ages students is necessary since South Kalimantan is an area full of wetlands. It is noticeable that all of the teachers agree that knowledge about wetlands in South Kalimantan is essential to be included in English subject since early ages. Knowledge about wetlands influences behaviour connected to their

Table 1. Questionnaire Results about Purpose of Teaching Wetlands for Young Learners

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The knowledge about wetlands in Kalimantan Selatan is essential to be covered in English subject	-	-	10	-
Learning wetlands in English subject will support students' achievement in other subject matters	-	1	8	1
Learning wetlands in English subject will encourage students' personal development in the future	-	2	7	1
Learning wetlands in English subject will encourage students' future career	-	3	7	-
The aim of teaching wetlands is to promote tourism in South Kalimantan	1	2	5	2

protection [11], [12], and a lack of understanding is commonly associated to their destruction. Furthermore, the data shows that 80% of teachers perceived that by learning wetlands in English subject, it will support students' achievement in other subject matters, such as social science studies. It is in line with what Fernández and Vizcano [13] stated that wetlands may be utilized as didactic for presenting scientific education in a broad.

In addition, studying English using wetland materials is perceived by most of teachers (70%) as one way to encourage students' personal development in the future since they will grow as wetland society. Based on data from the interview, it will support young learners' future career as part of wetlands society because they are earlier enriched with the knowledge of their environment. Besides, the purpose of teaching wetlands itself is perceived by half of teachers to also promote tourism in

Table 2. Questionnaire Results about Effective Ways of Teaching Wetland Materials

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Reading books related to wetlands is an effective way to study wetlands.	1	3	6	-
Reading articles related to wetlands from the internet is an effective way to study wetlands.	-	4	6	-
Listening to audio recordings related to wetlands from the internet is an effective way to study wetlands.	-	2	8	-
Watching videos related to wetlands from the internet is an effective way to study wetlands.	-	1	8	1
Listening to traditional songs of South Kalimantan is an effective way to study wetlands.	1	8	1	-
Writing English words and also translating them into the first language related to wetlands is an effective way to study wetlands.	1	3	6	-
Doing observation in wetlands area is an effective way to study wetlands.	-	7	3	-
Doing discussion in a classroom and making questions related to wetlands will be an effective way to learn English related to wetlands	-	2	8	-

Table 3. Questionnaire Results about Topics Needed for Teaching Wetland Materials

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
It is essential for students to study biodiversity in wetlands.	-	1	8	1
It is essential for students to study value and functions of wetlands.	-	3	6	1
It is essential for students to study the utilization, management and protection of wetlands.	-	3	7	-
It is essential for students to learn characteristics and types of wetlands.	-	4	6	-

South Kalimantan. In fact, wetlands are commonly regarded unproductive places, both today and in the past [14], and are linked with unpleasant smells, insects, and diseases. As a result, many wetlands have disappeared, while others are experiencing a range of negative consequences (Millenium Ecosystem Assessment 2005). As a result, as wetlands are one of the most endangered geosystems on the world (Hollis et al. 1988), it is crucial for young learners to be familiar with and further, study wetlands since they are the care-taker of them.

4.2. Perception about Effective Ways of Teaching Wetland Materials

Based on the data obtained related to ways to teach and learn wetlands, it is perceived by six teachers that reading books related to wetlands may be the effective way to learn English related to wetlands. Further, reading articles from the internet may help students to learn wetland materials effectively. Likewise, based on the data from the interview, listening to audio recordings and watching videos related to wetlands will give good impact to young learners since the media are considered attractive and interactive. Interestingly, most of teachers (80%) disagree that listening to traditional songs of South Kalimantan will improve students' knowledge related to wetlands. As one of the aspects taught in English, writing English words and also translating them into the first language related to wetlands is considered to be an acceptable way in learning about wetlands (60%). Surprisingly, 70% of the teachers perceive that doing observation in wetlands area is not necessary to be conducted for boosting English learning about wetlands. In speaking skill, the teachers (80%) agree that by doing discussion in a classroom and making questions related to wetlands will be an effective way to learn English related to wetlands. As a result, it's critical to include these activities in areas where wetlands and other ecosystems are close to kids. Teachers have a big influence on the kids who will either save or destroy wetlands in the future, thus they need to be able to teach them about the ecosystems around them through a variety of activities [13].

4.3. Perception about Topics Needed for Teaching Wetland Materials

For the topics needed for teaching English using wetland materials, most of them perceived that young learners are necessary to learn the biodiversity in wetlands. It is related to the most important role of wetlands itself which is maintaining biodiversity [15] (Roggeri 1995). As parts of wetlands society, the topic about value and functions of wetlands is also risen. Furthermore, learners are perceived necessary to know how to utilize, manage, and protect wetlands as early as possible. The reason is because wetlands serve ecological purposes and provide societal benefits [16]. Characteristics of wetlands and also types of wetlands such as river and delta are also important to be taught as the topics for teaching wetlands. From the results of the data, it shows that the evidence of a correlation between environmental knowledge and pro-environmental attitude [17] emphasizes the importance of education in reducing and resolving environmental issues [18].

4.4. Perception about Teaching Wetlands

Regarding the teachers' perception about teaching wetlands, almost all teachers agree that good teachers demonstrate the correct way to solve a problem related to wetlands utilization. In addition, they perceived that instruction should be built around problems with clear, correct answers, and around ideas that most students can grasp quickly. On the other hand, the data shows that some teachers perceived that how much students learn not only depend on how much background knowledge they have while the others thought that teaching facts is so crucial when teaching wetlands. As teachers for young learners, they recognize their role is to facilitate students' own inquiry. Teachers make decisions about their classroom teaching based on their views about language teaching and learning, according to Harste and Burke (1977) and Kuzborska (2011). They stressed that instructors' beliefs have a significant impact on their goals, processes, positions, and students. Furthermore, from the findings, from the early ages, learners are better

Table 4. Questionnaire Results about Teaching Wetlands

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Good teachers demonstrate the correct way to solve a problem related to wetlands utilization	-	-	8	2
How much students learn not only depend on how much background knowledge; teaching facts is so crucial when teaching wetlands.	-	1	7	2
Teacher's role is to facilitate students' own inquiry	-	-	9	1
Learners are better to be taught to think of solutions to practical problems themselves before the teacher shows them how they are solved	-	-	9	1
Thinking and reasoning processes are more important to be taught than specific curriculum content	-	2	8	1

to be taught to think of solutions to practical problems themselves before the teacher shows them how they are solved. More emphasis is placed on the development of thinking and reasoning processes than on the acquisition of specific knowledge [9], which is in line with what teachers perceived that thinking and reasoning processes are more important to be taught than specific curriculum content. In summary, the findings back up UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development Decade (2005–2014), which emphasizes that educational institutions must increase their efforts to prepare students for a sustainable future [13]. Moreover, teachers are the most influential mentors in educating children and teenagers to be tomorrow's environmental leaders [19].

5. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

In this study, some important issues related to teachers' perception in teaching English using wetland-based materials are reviewed. As it was indicated in the paper, knowledge on wetlands in South Kalimantan is considered essential to be taught in English subject since early ages. Moreover, varieties of activities need to be implemented to push young learners' eagerness to learn wetlands. The topics such as biodiversity and wetlands society are regarded crucial for young learners to comprehend. To sum up, it is suggested that educational institutions especially primary school must step up their efforts to prepare students for a long-term future in protecting the environment.

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