

# Strategies in using ict for teyl: difficulties, possibilities and pitfalls essay



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This study focused on teacher's background in TEYL, teaching strategies used, the role of institution in TEYL and the arrangement of classroom that influence TEYL. It also focused on the use of ICT and its influence as a new paradigm in TEYL. The research is designed by using questionnaire given to 24 English teachers in TK. Harapan Mulia Palembang. The choice of the institution based on the consideration that this institution deals with a combination of two specific markets in TEYL i. e. Kindergarten and Elementary School. The result of this research shows the background of teacher, strategies used the role of institution in teaching learning process, the classroom arrangement and the introduction of ICT in TEYL.

Key words: Teacher's Background, Teaching Strategies, the Role of Institution, Classroom Arrangement, and the Use of ICT in TEYL

Background of the Study Teaching English for Young Learners has become more popular. Parents now view that it is an essential for their children to have English early in kindergarten before they go to Elementary School. In addition to this fact, there are many institutions that provide English in the teaching process from these two levels. As the result, children were introduced to learn English at their early age. Since these young learners are unique in their characteristics, teachers who involve in TEYL should have some requirements to make the teaching learning process successful.

The development of technology also influences teaching learning process in the classroom including in TEYL. This study is designed to investigate the requirements of being a teacher in TEYL, the role of the institution in TEYL, the strategies used by the teachers, the influence of classroom organization

and the use of ICT in TEYL. All these factors will give much contribution to the success of teaching learning process for young learners.

Literature Review According to Slatterly & Willis (2001) as cited in Shin (2006), it is important to define young learner. For those who were 7 -12 years old are called young learners (YL) and Very Young Learners (VYL) are those under 7 years old. As a further result, the kindergarten students are classified into VYL and Elementary Students as YL. In this study, we consider both levels of students as young learners. Teaching young learners is different from teaching adults. They have their own characteristics that make them different.

Klein (2005) says that children show a greater motivation than adults to do things that appeal to them. It will be difficult for them to sit still in a longer time because they tend to change their mood every other minute. Moreover, Shin (2006) also states that for young students, from ages 5 to 10 especially, it is a good idea to move quickly from activity to activity. To make these young learners keep their attention in learning, teacher can use stories, whether it is a piece of fiction, a fable, or a folk tale. According to Hines (2005) story is especially relevant at that time when students are tired or are about to become tired.

It is also useful with students who are afraid to make mistakes, or with those who have knowledge about the language and can recognize words, but cannot easily produce what they can recognize. In addition, the text of a story gives words to them so that they can actively use the language.

Moreover, Neyman (2001) says if correctly chosen, storybooks would

correspond to the 'comprehensible input' which ESL theorists say should be emphasized in the communicative classroom. Reading stories can greatly affect one factor known to be critical in learning a language-motivation. In other words, when beginning readers can read a 'whole book', it is a source of pride and it also shows them that they actually have a use for the language they are learning.

Another way of teaching young learners is using pictures to introduce new words for them. The fact shows that most of children are familiar with the form of cartoons, comic strips, comic books and graphic novels. Fay (2007) says in the United States comic books are, unfortunately, still regarded by many parents and educators as academically detrimental, despite the fact that a growing body of research has shown otherwise. In addition, comic books contain a greater number of rare words to be introduced to children in learning target language.

Furthermore, Batianoni (2006) also states that music, games and movement activities play an integral part in children's learning process. In addition, children require a variety of activities in order to acquire a second or foreign language in the classroom. Students who come to the classrooms with different sets of skills will be determined by their upbringing and innate abilities, which naturally has a profound effect on their learning styles. Besides, the use of humor can be helpful in teaching young learners. Chee (2006) says when used in the correct manner, humor can help to reduce the 'distance' between teachers and students, who would remember more if they are enjoying themselves; however, inappropriate humor can also increase this distance.

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Therefore, it is vital that the lesson is well prepared and that only positive humor is adopted in the English classroom and this will help achieve the intended – to help the children learn English. Another important factor that must be considered in teaching young learners is educational background of teachers. According to Coltrane (2003) teachers need a thorough understanding of child development and how this may be applied to developmentally appropriate instructional design, sensitivity to the cultural backgrounds of the children and their parents, and skill in promoting positive home-school relationships. On the other hand, Moon (2005) states that it is often difficult to find the combination of professional knowledge and linguistic competence among trained primary teachers.

Given the importance of the TEYL teacher in motivating children and providing input in a foreign language context, the provision of adequately qualified TEYL teachers is probably the most critical of all conditions to put in place in order to have a chance in successfully implementing a TEYL program. At the same time, technology is becoming an important tool that is needed in education. Using ICT is also found in TEYL. According to Lince (2007: 4), the use of ICT is not designed to make a lesson more difficult. It is designed to make a difficult lesson becomes an easy, interesting and enjoyable to the student. One technology used in TEYL is Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL).

Smith (2006) says that the use of CALL software such as Window Messenger, E-mail, the Internet, and other specific and non specific software can be integrated using pedagogy to create a powerful language learning program.

It easily assists and even stimulates young second language learners in all  
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four skills of listening, speaking, writing, reading and also critical thinking. Because of the influence of technology in TEYL and the characteristics of children that have a great ability in learning a new language, teachers should find the best way to use these. Based on the conditions above, this research tries to find the importance and the influence of teacher's background, teaching strategies, the role of institution, the influence of classroom design in TEYL, and the strategy in using ICT for teaching English to young learners will be discussed as the solution of some problems, difficulties, possibilities and pitfalls found in TEYL and how ICT influences and assists teacher in TEYL.

**Methodology** The research was undertaken in TK. Harapan Mulia, Palembang on October 2007. A fact-finding survey was used by distributing questionnaires to 24 respondents, who are teachers of that kindergarten. The questionnaires were designed in closed and open ended format, and were centered on teacher's background, the institution, teaching strategies, and classroom. The first six questions were to collect data around teacher's educational background, their experience in teaching and the importance of psychology in TEYL. The purpose of question no 7 to 11 is to find the influence of institution in teaching-learning process.

Teaching strategies were investigated through question no 12 to 21 to find the methods or strategies used by teachers in TEYL. The last three questions are made to find the influence of classroom design in TEYL. Besides these 24 close format questions, the questionnaire also designed in open format that consists of 5 questions. The first question is to find how many hours YL have to spend a day in learning. Second question is to know teacher's motivation

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in teaching YL. Media used in teaching is asked on the third question. The fourth is to investigate the activities used by teacher and the last question is to know student's age on average.

**Findings** The age of the respondents are 21 to 37 years old in which 83.33% or 20 respondents are less than 30 years old and only 16.67% are more than 30 years old. On the other hand, the age of young learners who study in this kindergarten is about 16 month to 6 years old.

**Teacher's Background** In this research, there are 6 questions to analyze teacher's background. 11 respondents or 45.83% like teaching YL very much and have experience in teaching children or young learners. In addition, 17 teachers or 70.83% are from faculty of teacher training and only 3 teachers who are not from faculty of teacher training. On the open format question about their motivation to teach young learners, the answers are to enrich students' language, English is worldwide language, English is becoming very important, YL's are easy to be taught, some students love to learn English, being happy to see YL to speak English, to transfer their knowledge, to make students discipline and to give satisfaction if the students are able to speak English.

Since most of the teachers are less than 30 years old, 50% or 12 respondents have taught English less than 2 years. There are only 4 teachers or 16.67% who have experience in teaching young learners more than 2 years. Teachers also learn or read the book of psychology of children and 23 respondents or 95.83% admit the knowledge of psychology is important in TEYL.