

TEACHING ENGLISH FOR YOUNG LEARNERS IN THAI CONTEXT

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ABSTRAK

Studi ini mengeksplorasi pengalaman pelatih selama pelatihan mereka dengan guru sekolah dasar Thailand. Pelatihan ini dilakukan untuk mengajarkan siswa Thailand belajar bahasa Inggris. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menyelidiki proses pengajaran, bahan yang digunakan, aktivitas pengajaran dan persepsi guru dalam mengajar bahasa Inggris untuk pelajar dalam konteks Thailand. Data dikumpulkan melalui metode kualitatif dengan menggunakan observasi dan wawancara. Hasil penelitian terbaru ini menunjukkan bahwa para guru menggunakan buku teks bahasa Inggris, kartu flash, beberapa permainan dan permainan peran dalam kegiatan dan bahan-bahan di kelas. Guru juga memiliki beberapa masalah dalam mengajar bahasa Inggris, fasilitas yang tidak memadai di kelas adalah masalah guru yang ingin mengajar bahasa Inggris dan kemampuan siswa karena siswa bahasa asing masih tidak mengerti bahasa Inggris di sekolah, sebagian besar siswa tidak dapat membaca Huruf Latin, mereka masih sulit dibaca dalam huruf Latin. Mereka lebih sering menggunakan bahasa mereka yang merupakan naskah mereka sendiri atau 'Phasa Thai'.

Kata Kunci : Mengajar Bahasa Inggris, Bahasa Inggris untuk Pembelajaran, Konteks Thailand

ABSTRACT

This study explores the experience of trainers during their training with Thai elementary school teachers. This training is conducted to teach Thai students learning English. The aims of the study was to investigate the teaching process, materials used, instructional activity and the teacher perception in teaching English for young learners in Thai context. The data were collected through qualitative methods by using observation and interview. The result of this recent study showed that the teachers used English textbooks, flashcards, some games and role-play in activities and the materials in the classroom. The teacher also have some problems in teaching English , inadequate facilities in the classroom is the problem of the teacher who wants to teach English and the student ability as the foreign language student still didn't understand the English in the school, most student cannot read Latin letters, they are still difficult to read in Latin letters. They more often use their language that is their own script or 'Phasa Thai'.

Keywords: Teaching English, English for Young Learners, Thai Context.

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the international languages used as a means of communication in the international relationship and widely used in all branches of knowledge. English as Second Language is usually studied in a less formal environment by new residents to a

country where English is the primary language, often so that they can have a social and professional life at all outside of an immigrant community. English as Foreign Language is usually an academic topic taught in a formal classroom environment, often graded, in a country

where English is not the native language, frequently to make them a more appealing employee in fields where English skills are not a necessity for securing employment but a perk on a resume.

Education in Thailand is provided mainly by the Thai government through the ministry of Education from pre-school to senior high school. A free basic education of twelve years is guaranteed by the constitution, and a minimum of nine years' school attendance is mandatory. In 2009, the Ministry of Education announced the extension of a free, mandatory education to fifteen years. The school structure is divided into four key stages: the first three years in elementary school, Prathom (are for age groups 7–9; the second level, Prathom 4 through 6 are for age groups 10–12; the third level, Matthayom 1–3, is for age groups 13–15. The upper secondary level of schooling consists of Matthayom 4–6 for age groups 16–18 and is divided into academic and vocational streams. There are academic upper secondary schools, vocational upper secondary schools and comprehensive schools offering academic and vocational tracks. Students who choose the academic stream usually intend to enter a university. Young learners are learners in elementary school aging 9-10 years old who are learning as foreign language. we as a teacher can give young learners lesson on the beginner level, because the young learners are the beginner step in learning process.

Young learners are a learner that learn in first step, and they can proceed into the next level based on their skill. basically, young learners can be learning in play group, kindergarten, or elementary school to teach young learners.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) is described as a tried and tested way for people to see the world while earning a living. So that's why TELF become a tool to overseas the international network. The role of English is considered

as a second language or a foreign language in each country all over the world. As a second language, English has an essential role in national and social life through communication aspect. Meanwhile, as a foreign language, English is taught in schools and courses. It does not play an essential role in national or social life. However, the role of English is great. Mostly we find it in developing country. The role of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) is about conveying information to students in an interesting way and communicating through sense of English language.

English for Young Learners

Teaching young learners is by no means the same as teaching adults. In teaching young language learners, Pinter (2006) points out a number of reasons why children can benefit from learning a foreign language. It can develop children's basic communication abilities in the language. Communication abilities need to stimulate as early as possible. Teaching English also encourages enjoyment and motivation for language learning especially when it is in fun way.

The Characteristic of Young Learners

Regarding this, some experts in second/foreign language teaching have illustrated the characteristics of children and children's cognitive development as follows: (Scott & Ytreberg, 2010) states assert that children in preschool primary setting in generally learn by way of physical activities (learning by doing). This means that they learn through hands-on experiences and through manipulation of objects in the environment. Harmer (2007) states that children's understanding comes not from the explanation, but from what they see and hear, and crucially, have a chance to touch and interact with.

Strategies in Teaching English for Young Learners

Strategies are steps or action taken for the purpose of winning a war, other definition of strategy is an effort to achieve of success goal. In education context, J. R David (as cited in Hamruni, 2009), stated that strategy is a plan, method, or series of activities designed to achieve a particular educational goal.

Teaching strategy has been defined by several experts, such as: Kemp (as cited Hamruni, 2009), stated that teaching strategy is a teaching activity that must done by the teacher and the student so that the purpose of teaching reached effectively and efficiently. The other definitions stated by Kozma (as cited in Hamruni, 2009), stated that teaching strategy means every selected activity, that can give a facility or assistance to the student to reach certain teaching purpose.

Teaching English as a Foreign Language of English for Young Learners in Thai Context

Thailand is an EFL country in Southeast Asia in which English is taught as the first foreign language in every educational institution. Thai National Compulsory Education prescribes that Thai students must study English in both compulsory and elective courses for at least 12 years (6-year primary education and 6-year secondary education), excluding kindergarten-level study, before entering university. Although all Thai EFL students spend 12 years learning English in primary and secondary schools, the results of this 12-year learning remain problematic (Noom-ura, 2013.).

English could be the most unlikely subject for Thai student because of some reasons. Primarily, they know the importance of English but most of them are reluctant to front this foreign language. It's caused they find difficulties in understanding the grammar structures, memorizing vocabulary, translating the text and reading comprehension. Despite, those are the habitual activities they usually do in

the class with the local teacher, but the based materials that have been taught day in and day out could not make them adequately comprehend. They are at glance understand it but they are not able to use it in real-life context.

METHOD

The kind of research which is used by the researcher is qualitative research. The case study was used as the research designs this study.

Data Collection

The first procedures of data collection was observation, as follows ;

(1)The teacher introduced herself while teaching English in class. (2) The teacher gives some materials to student in English class.(3) The teacher asked the students to pay attention and answer the questions when the teacher teaching in English class. The second section of data collection was interview, were as follows:

(1)The researcher prepared the interview questions. (2)The researcher used audio recording while having interview. (3)The researcher transcribed the data from the recording of interview into the text. (4)The researcher concluded the points of interviews.

Data Analysis

Based on the data how to teach English for young learners in Thai context can be seen from the observation that will be conducted by the researcher. The benefits and the teacher response can be seen from the results of the interview which will be held by the researcher. After observing and Interview the teacher especially in Young Learners. It will be summarize to know how to teach English for young learners in Thai Context. The results of the teacher interview answers will be concluded by the researcher.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As stated in chapter 1, the problems to be answered are discussed in this section. This chapter discusses about how the researcher

present the result of research and analysis of collecting the data.

1. Teaching English as a Foreign Language of English for Young Learners in Thai Context

There are two discussions for this part from observation and interview which has been done by the writer. For answer the question number 1 “how is teaching English for Young Learners in Thai Context?”. The first research about the teaching process of English for young learners covered two things; they are the instructional activities and materials used in teaching English for young learners. The researcher had taken data by observing in the classroom as the process of teaching English for young learners, and the teacher had some interview question to the question number 2 about “the teachers perceive the teaching of English for young learners in Thai context”.

2. The Teaching Process

Generally, the teaching process in 8 meetings includes pre-teaching, while-teaching, and post-teaching. The researcher summarized all the materials that had been taught in the teaching process. Here in the following description of teaching and learning English in grade 4.

Pre Teaching, the teacher entered the classroom and greeting her students to begin the lesson in the day, and she review a little about last lesson. After that, the teacher checked the attendance of the students. Based on the observed grade 4 (prathom). The classroom condition actually was good enough there were some display pictures and many students creator installed on the wall such as vocabulary, poster, etc. there is something that related with English. At the time, when the process of teaching English began, the researcher found that the teacher opened the class mixing English to Thai language and the opposite for example “*Good morning*” and “*Sawasdee kha*”, the were fun and nice condition that make the learner happy to start the lesson material.

While teaching, covering the activities in the class teacher gives some theme, there are; textbooks, flashcard, internet resources, games and roleplay. These activities were used from the first meeting until 8 meetings.

3. Instructional Activities in Teaching EYL in Thai Context

the researcher observed the instructional activities in the class .

a. Flashcard Activity

Flashcard is the one of the easy media for teaching in the classroom in any technique. The teacher still used cardboard and paper images for the flashcard. Teachers show some vocabulary for example “*fruits*” and the teachers show the fruits like mango, banana, apple, grape, durian and watermelon. After that, the teacher writes the vocabulary in the whiteboard and the student can writes in the books.

b. Role-play

Role-play are used to allowed students to practice speaking in a conversational, build confidence and fluency, assess progress, and put learning into action. The teachers write in the whiteboard a short conversation. After that, the teacher decides the student two by two. And the student can play a Role-play on the situation.

c. Games

Teaching English trough games are the perfect solution to exploit all these evolving behaviors in a fun a exciting way, making your lesson simulation while your students are effortlessly learning English as a second language. In the classroom teacher using some games, the first game that used in the classroom is a *Board Race*, and another game that used in the classroom is 20 objects.

4. Using Materials in the teaching of EYL in Thai context

The teachers using some materials for teaching English for young Learners In Thai in every meetings in the class. The researcher observed 8 meetings; here are

the following materials that the teachers use in the class.

1. English Textbook

The teacher opens the textbook and giving the materials. There are some vocabulary, reading text and some test for the students. The teacher reading aloud the vocabulary and the student follow what the teacher said. And the teacher gives the meaning of vocabularies. Then, the student writes the meaning of the vocabularies in their text book. After that the teacher chooses the student one by one to speak some vocabularies with the meaning in Thai language. Sometimes the teacher mixes the language English to Thai and the opposite. And the teacher gives the student test one by one in the text book.

2. Internet Resources

Teacher using media for teaching English for young learners, some class have a television, and some teacher using media (YouTube) in teaching process. Usually teacher using media (YouTube) for introduce new vocabulary with the song in teaching process. Using media (YouTube) can make students happy and fun. Student can follow the song of vocabularies in their Television in the class.

5. Teacher Opinion on the Teaching English for Young Learners

To support the data of the observation, the researcher employed interviews. The researcher interviewed the English teacher. The researcher aimed at knowing the teacher's problems and students' problem during teaching and learning.

a. Students Ability

In the teachers opinion, they have so many challenges for teaching English in elementary school. They were mixing while teaching English. Based on the textbooks, they teach some vocabulary and sometimes those using games of teaching English. Teacher should Thailand language first and after that they using English language. in order that, students can understand what the teacher said.

b. Inadequate facilities in the classroom

In every class there is no *infocus* in the classroom, not all classes have television, and the school have just one computer to print the materials.

c. Language Barrier

In this school most student cannot read latin letters, they are still difficult to read Latin letters. They more often use their language that is their own language '*Phasa Thai*. And they also still difficult write their names using Latin.

After conducting an interview, the problems are come from their selves, because the willingness to study English is low. They think English is not their daily language, and they have no ability to study hard.

DISCUSSION

1. The Instructional activities of Teaching English for Young Learners

The researcher observed the teaching and learning process that was done by teaching in eight meetings. Based on the video class, which is the culture of moeslim, the researcher found that the teacher opens the class mixing Thai and English. And for the *Post-teaching* teacher evaluated the materials and and ask student problem of the materials.

2. Problems Encountered by the Teacher

The researcher found there is the problem when their teaching for young learners in Nida Suksa School. Based on the result, of observation and interview report, the problem that was found teacher had problem to understanding learning English materials that were taught to the students. There is some facility, were not supporting in the classroom, and the student ability cannot understand English or using Latin, student always using their language. So that's the problem faced by the teacher.

CONCLUSION

This research aimed to know how is the teaching process of English for young learners in thai context. And the instructional activities applied, the materials used and the teacher perceive.

1. Teaching process of English for Young Learners in Thai Context

The teaching process was so good. As a generally, teaching process in Thai some as the teaching in Indonesia. But there teacher too often use textbooks. So, the students still lack understanding of English lesson. The teacher very fixated on the textbook, so the teaching process is not very affective

2. The Instructional Activity applied in Teaching English for Young Learners

The instructional activities applied in teaching English for young learners was not very affective, because teacher always use English textbooks. Although, accompanied by the use of flashcard, internet resources, and games. They didn't use the lesson plan like in Indonesia. So, the teacher only rely on textbooks.

3. The teacher perceive the teaching of English For Young Learners in Thai Context

The teacher perceive the teaching of English For Young Learners in Thai Context was not good. Because, there are so many problem faced by the teacher who teaching English for young learners in Thai context. The problem are students ability, inadequate facility in the classroom, and language barrier.

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APPENDICES

Observation Guideline

No	Topic Observation	Comment
1.	The teaching Process	
2.	Instructional Activities	
3.	Teaching Materials	

Documentation of Observation

Interview Guideline

No	Topic Interview	Comment
1.	The teachers' perception on teaching English for Young Learners	
2.	The teachers' problems/challenges in teaching English for Young Learners	

Interview transcriptions

- a. **Researcher:** how long have you been teaching English in this school?
Teacher1: I have been teaching English in this school for 8 years.
Teacher2: I have been taught here around 5 years.
- b. **Researcher:** What do you think about the students in English classroom?
Teacher1: I think they are good in English classroom and they want to study hard.
Teacher2: I think they are look very fun in English classroom.
- c. **Researcher:** do they to learning English or are they bored in the classroom?
Teacher1: I think they very enjoy to learning English.
Teacher2: I think they are enjoy, because in my class I have many games for them in my class.
- d. **Researcher:** what are that you used to give the students?
Teacher1: I usually use media flashcards to the teaching English in my class.
Teacher2: I using spelling words, writing the vocabularies, use the vocabularies song and create the sentences by using fingers.
- e. **Researcher:** How do you control the students in the classroom?
Teacher1: I teach them to understand and give the inspiration. The important thing to let them know the benefit to study English.

- Teacher2:** I will make them motivate how important to learning English. And I will make the happy to learning English.
- f. **Researcher:** what makes you difficulty in teaching English?
Teacher1: define the lesson and they don't understand but I try hard to let student understand the lesson.
Teacher2: the difficulty is different language, because Thai language didn't use the latin letters. They should learn English word by word.
- g. **Researcher:** what's on your problem of teaching English in the classroom?
Teacher1: the media, this school have old media. I need new media and new technology.
Teacher2: for the problem that I faced in this school is the most students using their native language. That is Thai language. Even in the class when I thought them sometimes I have to use Thai to explain them.
- h. **Researcher:** for the some problem that u thought before. How do you solve your problem of teaching English in the classroom?
Teacher1: found new technic teaching and find the students style to study and improve them with the way they like.
Teacher2: I provide the game during the class.