

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THE UTILIZATION OF DIGITAL LEARNING MATERIALS IN EFL TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teachers'
perception

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***Abstract** - The aim of the research was to find out the teachers' perceptions towards the utilization of digital learning materials in EFL teaching and learning. The term digital learning material was used in this research to refer to materials included in the context of a course that support the students' achievement of the describe learning goals. The use of E-book as one of the digital learning materials became the main focus of this research. The subjects of the research were the English teachers of SMK LKIA and SMK 5 in Pontianak. A descriptive research design was implemented to achieve the purpose of this study. The writer utilized the structured questionnaires and interviews to collect the data. In analyzing the data, the writer used qualitative analysis of interactive models. Based on the findings of the study, most of the English teachers in SMK LKIA and SMK 5 Pontianak have already integrated digital learning materials in their EFL teaching eventhough they still need to improve their knowledge to use another PDF softwares to support their teahing. In addition, the English teachers in SMK LKIA and SMK 5 Pontianak also showed positive attitude towards the utilization of digital learning materials.*

***Keywords:** Teachers' perception, digital learning material.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of technology in Information and Communication (ICT) has brought remarkable changes in the recent times. The utilization of ICT in education has recently started to give the contribution on the potential and significant progress in language learning. Research has shown that the use of instructional technology and ICT in the English language classroom can optimize the students' language acquisition and encourage them to continue their learning and stimulate their creativity and passion (Azmi, 2017). The use of technology in English Language Teaching can enhance the quality of the learning experience by making the class activities more varied and accessible (Qasem & Viswanathappa, 2016). Hence, the use of ICT is a necessity not only for the teachers but also for the students in order to improve the quality of learning and mastery of ICT.

SPECTRAL

Jurnal Ilmiah STBA
Vol.4 No.1
Januari 2018
ISSN 0216-3381

By using the ICT, the teachers will be easier to conduct classes. (Gashemi & Hashemi, 2011) states that ICT helps English learners by allowing them to communicate quickly and flexibly. With the development of ICT around the world, the quantity of texts available in various languages especially in English has increased (Kamgar & Jadidi, 2016). It requires the learners to improve their reading ability and interact with different authentic material. Moreover, ICT helps the students to expand their independency. Regarding to the importance of ICT, the teachers therefore should be able to integrate the ICT in their process of teaching and learning English.

However, the use of ICT in teaching requires teachers’ competencies and makes the profession more challenging to obtain new knowledge. Most of the teachers in developing country feel that they are not prepared to use the technology (Gebremedhin & Fenta, 2015). The integration of ICT into curriculum is an important process in ensuring the quality of education. That’s why, the existence of technology alone will not create significant changes in a school. Teachers are the main factor in the implementation of ICT in education. Without the involvement of teachers, the students may not take advantage of the potential benefits of ICT. Therefore, teachers should have adequate skills before integrating ICT in their process of teaching and learning.

Teachers need to develop not only essential computer skills but also proficiency in using varied tools to solve problem, make informed decisions, and generate new knowledge to support the process of their EFL teaching. Establishing quality in integrating ICT is a very important issue for any academic program (Afifi & Alamri, 2014). E-course is a combination of text, audio, video, image, an animation with visual effects that can facilitate the learning process. Furthermore, a course which delivers over networkbased electronic devices allows users to share visions and influence knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour (Eremias & Subash, 2013).

The use of multimedia is one of the parts of ICT. Multimedia is a tool that can create dynamic and interactive presentations that combine text, graphics, animation, audio, and video images (Sari, Suryani, Rochsantiningsih, & Suharno, 2017). One of the utilization of ICT in English Language Teaching is through the use of digital learning materials (E-book). E-books give students the freedom to highlight, instantly

search for the major terms or chapter titles, adjust font sizes, copy and paste, and hear audio translations of print. Online interactivity saves readers’ time searching for specific information in hundreds and hundreds of pages of material. Many E-books also provide students with quizzes or practice questions based off of chapters they have just read. This allows students to take responsibility for their own learning without outside instruction to improve their skills to interact well in the new digital learning environment (Pinto & Cordon, 2014). Considering the benefits of digital learning materials, the English teachers need to optimize the use of E-book in their EFL teaching and learning. Before the English teachers start to integrate digital learning material in their EFL teaching, they absolutely need to have positive perception towards the use of it.

There is needed to remember, teachers’ perceptions has a crucial role in influencing the effectiveness of ICT education from many perspectives. (Voogt, 2010) found that teachers who use technology extensively in their lessons tend to have a high level of confidence in pedagogical technology skills and focus on a learner-centered approach. They are more engaged in professional development activities and collaboration with colleagues than teachers who do not use technology very often. In order to change teachers' beliefs, schools must develop strong leaderships. Moreover, the school principals should not only be an official supervisor but also be a personal advisor to provide assistance to teachers.

Moreover, teacher perceptions towards the use of ICT is important because it forms a tendency that helps them to be favourable or unfavourable towards the usage of the most modern technology in the field of English Language Teaching (Qasem & Viswanathappa, 2016). There were several previous studies which revealed the importance of teacher perceptions to support the teachers’ readiness in integrating ICT in the process of teaching and learning. The study of (Onyia & Onyia, 2011) attempted to find out whether a significant correlation exists between perception of self-efficacy and technology adoption among teachers. The findings pointed out a positive correlation between teacher self-efficacy and the integration of technology. The previous study conducted by (Al-Bataineh, 2014) also showed that teachers believe ICT competency is needed for implementing technology in social studies classrooms.

Nevertheless, there had been few researches about the teachers’ perceptions toward the utilization of digital learning materials in EFL teaching and learning. Therefore, the writer was encouraged to fill in the research gap. The writer tried to investigate the teachers’ technical readiness and perceptions toward the utilization of digital learning materials in EFL teaching and learning. Understanding English teachers’ perceptions is essential because it is a way to figure out how they integrate technology into their teaching. This research is one of the attempts to encourage English teachers to develop digital learning materials by training them on how to use technology on the process of teaching and learning and increase the level of educational technology usage in EFL teaching. In order to achieve these goals, the writer must understand how English teachers perceive digital learning materials integration into their teaching.

II. METHODS

Research design has a vital role in a research because the quality of research greatly depends on the type of design. In this research, the writer implemented the form of qualitative approach to analyze the data. Descriptive research was selected to be implemented in this research. The writer used descriptive research because she intended to find out the teachers’ perception towards the utilization of digital learning materials in EFL teaching and learning. Descriptive research defined by Ary, et al. (2010) is a research used to describe a situation, subject, behaviour, or phenomenon. The procedure of descriptive research which applied in this research was described in the following steps namely, (1) statement of the problem, (2) identification of information, (3) selection of data gathering information, (4) identification of target population and sample, (5) design of information collection procedure, (6) collection of information, (7) analysis of information, and (8) generalization and/or prediction.

This research had been conducted at SMK LKIA and SMK 5 Pontianak. The sample of this research consisted of eight English teachers from SMK LKIA and SMK 5 Pontianak. The writer utilized questionnaires and interviews as the data collection. The writer used the structured questionnaires to collect the information

from teachers about their experience in using the digital learning materials in EFL teaching. The questionnaires used in this research were divided into 2 sections: (1) questionnaire about the teacher readiness on the utilization of digital learning materials in EFL teaching and, (2) questionnaires about teacher's attitude toward the utilization of digital learning materials in EFL teaching. The data collected from the respondents were gathered together. After that, the writer analyzed the data by using the procedure of qualitative analysis.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The first finding explored the English teachers’ technical readiness towards digital learning materials. Based on the findings, it could be seen that 80% English teachers in SMK LKIA and SMK 5 Pontianak were already familiar with the ways of integrating technology in the curriculum. It indicated that the English teachers’ technical readiness towards digital learning materials was considered high. In terms of managing the time allocated in technology-enriched classroom, 85% of respondents also showed that they could manage the time allocation for teaching and learning process effectively and efficiently. It could be happened because most of the students often used the technology in their daily life. So, they could easily understand how to use the PDF software to access the E-book. In addition, the findings also showed that 75% of English teachers in SMK LKIA and SMK 5 Pontianak were competent in using E-book software. The 25% teachers acknowledged that they were not competent in using E-book software such as flip book, MOBI, or EPUB. Therefore, the teachers need to learn more to use another E-book and PDF software in their EFL teaching and learning. The successful integration of digital learning materials relied heavily on teachers’ readiness to adopt technology (Singh & Chan, 2014).

In fact, most of the teachers have already integrated digital learning materials in their process of teaching and learning EFL. It could be seen from the findings that most of the teachers strongly agree to use digital learning materials. In other words, the English teachers showed positive attitude towards the use of digital learning materials in EFL teaching and learning. The teachers considered digital-based teaching material as one of the powerful tool in their teaching process because it

provided numerous advantages in EFL teaching and learning. The first, digital learning materials encouraged the students to participate actively. The second, digital learning materials facilitated the students to have independent learning. The third, it motivated the students to sharpen their understanding towards the topic being discussed. The last, the teacher could create an enjoyable circumstance for learning. The findings also suggested that the education stakeholders need to ensure that all of the teachers are ready to use digital learning materials. Not only the education stakeholder but also the teacher need to be more skillful in using this technology. This finding was supported by the previous study from (Cachia & Ferrari, 2010). They revealed that the important technologies for learning such as computer and educational software were put as the first priority in technology. In addition, the teachers need to have a great understanding, new approaches, new methods, and new attitudes to integrate the technology (Sabzian & Gilakjani, 2013).

The results of interviews with the English teachers in SMK LKIA and SMK 5 Pontianak related to the use of digital books or e-books revealed that majority of the English teachers should start to utilize the English digital books in order to follow the needs in digital teaching era. Most of the teachers also believed that the integration of e-book enabled the teachers to improve the quality of the learning process in the classroom. In addition, English teachers and students will also be challenged to master the computarial skills which covered the ability in using computer and gadgets. The English teachers needed to find out a clear, understandable, and interesting English E-book that they could use to support the EFL teaching and learning process.

Despite most of the teachers have already used digital-based materials in their EFL teaching. It could be inferred that the teachers also encountered some obstacles during the teaching and learning process. One of the obstacles was lack of technical support. Whereas, the teachers could not use the digital learning materials effectively and efficiently without adequate technical support. Another obstacle was limited understanding on how to integrate digital learning materials in EFL teaching and learning. The teachers need to have adequate understanding about ICT before they plan to utilize the digital-based teaching material in their EFL teaching. The last, lack

of digital learning materials at school also became another obstacles that hinder the teachers to utilize the digital learning materials in their teaching.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it could be concluded that the English teachers’ technical readiness towards digital learning materials was considered high. The English teachers in SMK LKIA and SMK 5 Pontianak also showed positive attitude towards the utilization of digital learning materials. It could be seen from the findings that most of the English teachers strongly agree to use digital learning materials in the process of the EFL teaching and learning. The findings revealed that most of the English teachers in SMK LKIA and SMK 5 Pontianak have already integrated digital learning materials in their EFL teaching eventhough they still need to improve their knowledge to use another softwares. The findings was similar to the previous research conducted by (Mahmud & Hj. Ismail, 2010). His findings revealed that there was minority group of teachers who was really knowledgeable in implementing ICT in their classroom.

In addition, the findings indicated that the English teachers in SMK LKIA and SMK 5 Pontianak had strong desire to integrate digital learning materials effectively in the EFL teaching and learning. Hence, the process of EFL teaching and learning was more enjoyable. The students’ participation also increased significantly after the English teachers utilized the digital learning materials. By integrating digital learning materials, the students could enhance their understanding towards the topic being discussed by themselves. As a result, the students were more independent in the process of EFL teaching and learning in the classroom. This is in line with the results conducted by Ayu (2017) showed that English teachers needed to combine different resources in their process of EFL teaching as well as applying different teaching approaches and methods to support the utilization of digital learning materials in the classroom.

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