

Understanding the Discrepancy between the Perceptions and Implementation of Primary English Teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge

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Abstract

This study aimed to analyze the perceptions and implementation of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) of teaching English to young learners by English primary teachers and analyze the consistency between the perceptions and implementation. This study used an embedded mixed method design with qualitative dominant. The sample subjects were 3 English teachers from different schools. The samples and schools were determined by using convenience sampling. Distributing questionnaire, observation, and interview were the main data collection techniques. The results showed the average score of the teachers' perceptions was 3.6203 and in the interval $3.3335 \leq M < 4.0005$ which categorized high and in a strong qualification. The average frequency of teachers' implementation was 4.7045 and in the interval $0.329 \leq M < 5.0795$ which categorized very low. Lastly, the consistency between the two showed no consistency between teachers' perceptions and implementation of PCK. This inconsistency due to personal and institutional challenges faced by the observed teachers such as lack of time, ineffective students' behavior management, textbook-based teaching material, non-qualified English education background and inadequate school facilities. Implications drawn from the findings regarding efforts on increasing teachers' professional enthusiasm is discussed.

Keywords: Perceptions, Implementation, PCK

1. Introduction

Indonesia is one of the example of EFL countries where English is spoken as foreign language (Alfia et al., 2020; Octaberlina & Muslimin, 2020). Realizing the importance of English, it is necessary to introduce English since an early age as it is a golden age for language acquisition. In this golden age, any language can be learned naturally as children's brains are still flexible to learn anything (Ratminingsih et al., 2018; Sukarno, 2008). This statement is in line with Piaget's theory of children cognitive development which mentions that children are active learners and thinkers. Piaget believes that a child is an 'active thinker' as they construct their knowledge by working with the objects and by solving problems occurred in the environment around them (Immordino-Yang et al., 2018; Juwantara, 2019). The concept of the golden age of learning language supports the proliferation of the concept of Teaching English to Young Learners (Padmadewi et al., 2009). English subject inclusion in the 2006 Curriculum, is now changed in the currently implemented curriculum, the 2013 Curriculum. The 2013 Curriculum removes English subject as local content in primary schools (Azmy, 2020; Listyarani, 2019). However, the policy is not an absolute standard as primary schools are still allowed to include English subjects based on contextual needs. For example, in Bali as tourism destination, most primary schools maintain English subjects as English acquisition is a basic tourism demand. Students may find benefits of learning English as it enables them to communicate with foreigners/tourists. Such phenomenon also occurs in Bangli, a regency in Bali, where English is taught in primary school.

The absence of national standards in terms of instructional sets for teaching English in primary schools is the impact of English elimination in the 2013 Curriculum. In addition, there are more non-qualified English teachers who teach English in primary school rather than qualified English teachers (Zein, 2017a). Some school principals assign the homeroom

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teachers to teach English (Listyariani, 2019). The aforementioned teachers did not have a special qualification to teach English to young learners. Consequently, they have lack of knowledge of teaching English. Teaching English is not easy for the primary school teacher in EFL countries. This due to English is not the major language that is used by teachers and students (Mauludin, 2015). Teacher must have competency in order to teach students in the EFL country. Basically, young learners differs from adults since young learners have distinctive characteristics that are widely accepted (Juhana, 2014; Nurasiah, 2017). Therefore, in teaching young learners, to achieve learning goals, teachers need to know about the teaching approaches appropriate for young learners. Hence, teachers should have pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) (Magnusson et al., 1999; Shulman, 1986). Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) is really important in developing teacher expertise (Faisal, 2015). Over 20 years, pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) as the focus of much research (Ibrahim, 2016). Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) consists of subject matter knowledge, learners' conception, and instructional strategies (Shulman, 1986). Subject matter knowledge consists of language awareness and language proficiency (Andrews, 2001). Learners' conception is the knowledge about the characteristics of the learners and instructional strategies are the strategies that are used by the teacher in teaching which appropriate with the characteristics of the learners.

There are several studies on teaching English to young learners (TEYL) that have been conducted. Studies about what influence teaching such as studies on the use of media (Aini, 2013), the impact of good learning environment (Artini, 2017; Putra, 2012), the challenges of language teaching (Rahayu, 2016), and the use of traditional game (Rusiana & Nuraeningsih, 2016). Furthermore, studies about what teachers know such as studies on teacher theoretical and practical knowledge (Arikan, 2015), teachers' knowledge of young English learners (Karea, 2016), and English teachers' perspectives of pedagogy in teaching young learners (Zein, 2017b). In addition, studies about what teachers perceive and practice could be seen in the study on the alignment of teachers' perceptions and practices of effective English teaching (Utami, 2018) and teacher teaching perceptions and implementation (Listyariani, 2019). Obviously, there are few studies concern on teachers' perceptions and practices. Even more scarce is study on the consistency between teachers' perceptions and implementation in terms of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). The perception as the way people see the world and involve within. Each people will have different perspective and action regarding a thing due to the different sociocultural, culture, social and experiences (McDonald, 2012). Moreover, what English teachers perceive as effective English teaching may not be always implemented (Utami, 2018). Thus, it is very important to know the perceptions and implementation of English teachers in terms of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) especially in primary schools.

This research aims to examine the perceptions and implementation of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) of teaching English to young learners by involving English primary school teachers in Bangli regency. The study tries to investigate (1) teachers' perceptions of PCK, (2) teachers' implementation of PCK, and (3) the consistency between teachers' perceptions and implementation of PCK. The result of this study was expected to increase knowledge about teaching English in primary schools, especially related to the teachers' perceptions and the implementation of teaching English as well as to provide information on the consistency between teachers' perceptions and implementation in terms of PCK in primary schools in Bangli. Practically, this study is expected to inspire future studies in the field of teaching English in primary schools. Besides, this research inspires for primary school English teachers to always improve their knowledge and the quality of the implementation of PCK in teaching English to young learners.

2. Method

The research design was the embedded mixed method design with qualitative dominant. One dataset was combined with another in order to make them support each other. The researcher was embedding a secondary form of data within a larger study that

had a different form of data as the primary database and this secondary database provided a supporting role in this research (Creswell, 2012). The subjects of the study were 3 primary school English teachers in Bangli. Limited participants were included as the study would like to focus on understanding the depth of the phenomenon instead of the generalization of findings (Creswell, 2012). Convenience sampling was used as a technique to choose the teachers and schools. Convenience sampling is also known as availability sampling which is a specific type of non-probability sampling method that relies on collecting data from members of the population who are ready to participate in the study. This sampling technique chooses the subjects because of the easy accessibility and proximity to the researcher (Creswell, 2012).

The study elicits several concepts of PCK to develop instruments (questionnaire and observation sheet). These theories were the theory about subject matter knowledge that consists of language awareness and language proficiency (Andrews, 2001), theory about young learners' characteristics (Juhana, 2014), and theory about the use of learning strategies for teaching English to young learners (Çakır, 2004; Medwell et al., 2009). The questionnaire consisting of 50 statements was used to collect the data about the teachers' perceptions of PCK in teaching English to young learners. The statements in the questionnaire were divided into three aspects of PCK in teaching English to young learners (see the blueprint attached). Each aspect had some dimensions explained by several indicators. The three aspects of PCK in the questionnaire, namely 1) subject matter knowledge, 2) knowledge of young learners' characteristics, and 3) the use of learning strategies for teaching English to young learners. The questionnaire to collect the data of teachers' perceptions was adapted from the questionnaire of pedagogical knowledge in teaching young learners (Listyariani, 2019). Besides, one aspect was added namely the subject matter knowledge to complete the PCK components. The questionnaire used five Likert scale from 1 (disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). To collect data of implementation, the researcher conducted two times observation for each teacher and filled out the observation sheet containing the components of PCK. In addition, the previously collected data were triangulated by interview sessions. The information to be elicited by the interview was to support the understanding of the consistency between teachers' perceptions and implementation of PCK in teaching English to young learners.

This research used two methods, namely quantitative, which was calculating the average score of perceptions score and frequency implementation and qualitative analysis which was analyzing all the data through Miles & Huberman (1994) analysis method. To analyze the quantitative data, Ideal Mean (Mi) and the Ideal Standard Deviation (SDi) were computed and qualifications of teachers' perceptions and categorization of teachers' implementation were determined by using the level of categorization and qualification proposed by Koyan (2012) as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Guideline of categorization and qualification level

Criteria	Categorization	Qualification
$Mi + 1.5 SDi \leq M \leq Mi + 3.0 SDi$	Very high	Very strong
$Mi + 0.5 SDi \leq M < Mi + 1.5 SDi$	High	Strong
$Mi - 0.5 SDi \leq M < Mi + 0.5 SDi$	Average	Neutral
$Mi - 1.5 SDi \leq M < Mi - 0.5 SDi$	Low	Weak
$Mi - 3.0 SDi \leq X < Mi - 1.5 SDi$	Very low	Very weak

To analyze the qualitative data, interactive analysis model was used (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this model there are 4 steps, namely data collection, data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusion or verification. The data analysis was done interactively. The researcher might return to data reduction when unwanted data were collected in the conclusion stage or the researcher might return to data collection when the result of data analysis was not enough to answer the research questions. As the nature of qualitative research, triangulation data was needed. In this study, to obtain a validate findings

the researcher cross-check information by using multiple methods of data collection, multiple data sources, multiple investigators and multiple theories to confirm emergent findings (Denzin, 2010; Gay et al., 2012).

3. Result and Discussion

Results

The purposes of this study are to describe the teachers' perceptions, implementation, and the consistency between the perceptions and implementation of PCK in teaching English to young learners by primary English teachers in Bangli. Table 2 shows the result of the questionnaire of PCK.

Table 2. Teachers' perceptions of PCK

Aspects	Average	Qualification
Subject matter knowledge	3.5713	Strong
Knowledge of young learners' characteristics	3.7963	Strong
The use of learning strategies for young learners	3.4933	Strong
PCK	3.6203	Strong

Table 2 shows that the average score of the three teachers' perceptions was 3.6204, within the interval $3.3335 \leq M < 4.0005$. It means the three teachers had a good understanding of the three aspects of PCK in teaching English to young learners. By having a good understanding of the concept of PCK for teaching English to young learners, the teachers were expected to teach the students by using activities that suitable for young learners. In this research, the researcher used observation sheet to know how the implementation of PCK by English teachers in Bangli. Therefore, Table 3 shows the result of the teachers' implementation of PCK in the classroom based on 2 times observation of each teacher.

Table 3. Teachers' implementation of PCK

Aspects	Average	Categorization
Subject matter knowledge	9.25	Average
Knowledge of young learners' characteristics	2.1667	Very low
The use of learning strategies for young learners	2.6967	Very low
PCK	4.7045	Very low

The results of observation sheet from the three teachers showed that the teachers categorized very low of the implementation of PCK in teaching English to young learners because the average frequency was 4.7045 and in the interval $0.329 \leq M < 5.0795$. If compared based on each aspect in the PCK, the aspect of "Subject matter knowledge" showed average categorization because the average frequency was 9.25 and in the interval $8.2465 \leq M < 11.4135$. The teachers already implemented the subject matter knowledge related to language awareness in correcting grammar, pronunciation, spelling, choice of words. While, in language proficiency, the three teachers already tried to implemented language proficiency in the classroom such as speak English fluently or writing using English on the board/in a document without errors. It means the teachers already implemented language awareness and language proficiency but the frequency still in the average categorization.

Moreover, the implementation from the other aspect such as knowledge about "Young learners' characteristics", and "The use of learning strategies for young learners" categorized very low because the average frequency was in the interval $0.329 \leq M < 5.0795$. The average frequency of knowledge about young learners' characteristics was 2.1667 and

the average frequency of the use of learning strategies for young learners was 2.6967. It means that from the three aspects of PCK the teachers implement more in the aspect subject matter knowledge regarding language awareness and language proficiency rather than the other two aspects. Based on the results of the questionnaire and observation sheet, the consistency between teachers' perceptions and the implementation of PCK could be seen. Table 4 shows the consistency between the perceptions and implementation of PCK by the three English teachers.

Table 4. Consistency of teachers' perceptions and implementation of PCK

Aspects	Perceptions	Implementation	Consistency
Subject matter knowledge	Strong	Average	Slightly consistent
Knowledge of young learners' characteristics	Strong	Very low	No consistency
The use of learning strategies for young learners	Strong	Very low	No consistency
PCK	Strong	Very low	No consistency

Based on the result of the questionnaire the teachers had strong perceptions towards PCK, but based on the result of observation sheet, the implementation of PCK categorized very low. It means there was inconsistency between the perceptions and the implementation of PCK.

Discussion

In the aspect of "Subject matter knowledge" the teachers got average score 3.5713 and in the interval $3.3335 \leq M < 4.0005$ which indicated strong qualification of perceptions. Subject matter knowledge is about systems of the language that enables teachers to teach effectively (Thornbury, 1997). The teachers should have language awareness and language proficiency (Andrews, 2001). Based on the results of the questionnaire, the teachers were aware of the importance of language awareness as a filter against some errors of the students in grammar, pronunciation, spelling, or choice of words. Besides, the teachers were aware of the importance of language proficiency which was the ability of the teachers to use the language such as by using/speaking English language or even writing English on a board or document without errors. However, the teacher not only has knowledge but the teacher also should have the abilities that can be utilized for communicative purposes to make the students receive maximum input in the learning process (Andrews, 2001). The teachers also had strong perceptions towards the aspect of "Knowledge of young learners' characteristics" since the average score was 3.7963 and in the interval $3.3335 \leq M < 4.0005$. Knowledge of young learners is about teachers' understanding of learners' personal characteristics, motivation, needs, learning styles, social and also cultural background (Faisal, 2015; Juhana, 2014).

The teachers' perceptions of pedagogical content knowledge in teaching English to young learners in the strong qualification. While, the implementation categorized very low. Therefore, the perceptions and implementation showed no consistency. The result of this study in line with the result of the study which found the consistency between the perceptions and implementation was not always consistent (Listyariani, 2019). The difference with the previous study is this study includes subject matter knowledge to be analyzed which consists of language awareness and language proficiency. Besides, the others research in the different topics but investigate the consistency between the teachers' perceptions and the practices also showed not always consistent (Utami, 2018; Yanti et al., 2017; Yuvayapan, 2019). Therefore, if look at each aspect, the consistency of the teachers' perceptions and the implementation in the aspect "Subject matter knowledge" showed slightly consistent and it means in this concept might no problems. While, teachers' perceptions and the implementation in the aspect "Knowledge of young learners' characteristics" and "The use of learning strategies" showed no consistency. Actually, the teachers already implemented

some indicators in the observation sheet, but in the very low frequency which made the average frequency categorized very low in these two aspects. Therefore, this situation made the perceptions and implementation showed no consistency. To confirm the results of the questionnaire and observation, the researcher conducted an interview with the three teachers.

The inconsistency of teachers' perceptions and the implementation was due to some reasons or problems faced by the teachers. The problem faced by T1 was *lack of time*. T1 said "... *lacking of time because some students are late in understanding new things because it is a little difficult for them... It's the beginning from the first time I came to this primary school, it was the first time for grade 4 until grade 6 to learn English...*" The lack of time due to the students need more time to understand the material because the students still beginners. Therefore, the teacher did not use some strategies which gave the students the opportunity to learn by trying new things and worked with objects or ideas which could accommodate young learners' characteristics that have a great curiosity. *Inadequate facility* also the problem faced by T1. T1 said, "*The facilities are inadequate so it is difficult.*" The facility intended was LCD which could be used to play the video in order to teach the students by using visual media that could be explored. T1 felt that the *students were hard to be controlled*. T1 said "... *the students are difficult to be controlled, so I am lazy to use games.*" The students were hard to be controlled made the teacher did not use games in the class to provide a pleasant learning atmosphere.

There were some reasons or problems faced by T2 which made the perceptions and implementation not consistent. Same as T1, T2 also faced *the problem in the facilities*. T2 said "...*there is no LCD...*" The facility such as LCD made the teacher did not use visual media that could be explored. T2 also said, "*In listening, we have to use a recording device like the radio that makes it difficult to implement... in the library, there is no book story in English.*" The inadequate facility for listening activity such an audio and facility for reading such storybooks made the teacher did not use media which could improve the four language skills of the students. The problem faced by T2 was inclined to do *finishing the material* in the limited time because many holidays which made the teacher afraid the students did not study at home. T2 said "*There are many holidays which make I am afraid of the students in the long holidays they do not study at home. In the school, the teacher was inclined to do finishing the material so that it can match the material with the test time.*" This problem made the teacher did not use the games in the learning activities in order to provide a pleasant learning atmosphere.

Moreover, the reason which made the teacher not consistent with her perceptions and implementation was the teacher *focused on using the textbook*. T2 said "... *students from grade 5 until 6 have brought their textbook. Students when learn followed the activities in the book...*" This reason made the teacher carried out the activities based on the textbook and did not try to teach the students by trying new things and learn through working with objects or ideas to accommodate young learners' characteristics that have a great curiosity, did not use visual media that could be explored, and did not use activity to develop social skills of the students. T2 also said that "... *they are more focused on the lessons in the book.*" Due to focus on the lesson in the textbook, the teacher did not conduct listening and repeating activity and did not conduct contextual activities. The inconsistency of the perceptions and implementation of T3 also due to some reasons or problems faced. The problem faced by T3 was *lack of time*. T3 said, "...*takes a long time because in primary school students are still beginners in learning English...*" The lack of time due to the students still beginners and need more time when studying. This condition made the teacher did not teach the students to try new things in order to accommodate young learners' characteristics that have a great curiosity, did not conduct listening and repeating activity, did not use games to provide a pleasant learning atmosphere, or even used the media which could improve the four language skills.

Teacher was inclined to do *finishing the material* approach instead of teaching the students with the strategy which accommodate young learners' characteristics. T3 mentioned that the action was due to a lot of holidays and midterm assessment which cut off days of

effective session. T3 said, "... because of the situation, the teacher try to do finishing the material because there are PTS and many holidays too..." This condition made the teacher teach the student in a limited time and could not give the opportunity to students to learn by listening and repeating activity to accommodate young learners' characteristics that actively construct meaning from their experiences. T3 also did not ready to teach the students which made the teacher need more time to learn the material before teaching the students. T3 said "... I sometimes get scared when teaching...I had to study at home, sometimes I asked to teach at the last lesson so I could study." The teacher did not ready to teach the students and need more time to study because *the background education is not English*. Due to the teacher need more time to study made the teacher could not prepare visual media that could be explored to the students.

Therefore, the challenges faced by the teachers which made the discrepancy between perceptions and implementation were categorized into two: personal challenges and institutional challenges. Personally, teachers faced issues such as having lack of time, ineffective students' behavior management, textbook-based teaching material, non-qualified English education background. Besides, institutional challenge such as inadequate school facilities. The problem of student behavior management is in line with the study which found that the teacher had a problem with noisy classes and student discipline (Nurasiah, 2017). This shows that teachers need to search for ways to improve their classroom management skills.

Besides, based on the previous research, the researchers found one of the teachers only used textbooks as the learning source (Cahyati et al., 2019). This phenomenon also happened in this study in which teachers were more textbook oriented. The problems of inadequate facilities, the use of finishing the material approach and being non-qualified English teachers were also found in the study (Listyarani, 2019). Although T3 has not English educational background, he showed his efforts in using strategies in teaching English to young learners since he had long service years, 13 years. One of the factors that influence the pedagogical knowledge is teachers' experience in teaching (Kultsum, 2017). With this result, it seems that involving teachers in certain continuing professional development program is inevitable (Utami et al., 2019).

Thus, the implication from the results of the analysis is primary English teachers not only need to always increase their knowledge, but the teachers should improve the quality of the implementation of PCK in teaching English to young learners. The knowledge of content and pedagogy with the appropriate instructional strategies can achieve the intended learning objectives. Moreover, the teachers could involve in certain continuing professional development programs to increase teachers' ability in teaching English to young learners. The result of this study is expected to give contribution in providing the information on the teachers' perceptions, implementation, and the consistency between the perceptions and implementation in terms of PCK since this study added the aspect of subject matter knowledge to complete the PCK components.

4. Conclusions and Suggestions

The study shows that teachers' perceptions of pedagogical content knowledge in teaching English to young learners was categorized in a strong qualification. However, the implementation was categorized very low. Consequently, huge discrepancy was evidenced between the perceptions and implementation of PCK in teaching English to young learners by primary English teachers in Bangli. The inconsistency of the perceptions and implementation due to some personal and institutional challenges. The study highlights teachers' non-qualified English background and schools' failure to provide sufficient facilities among these challenges. Hence, despite the removal of English subject from primary school curriculum, government needs to establish a standard for English teaching for those schools which consider to keep English in their curriculum. In addition, school administrator cannot take it for granted that any teachers can teach English. English teachers in primary schools needs to be encouraged to update their knowledge and skills to support their responsibility.

In short, school administrators need to enhance teachers' professional awareness by providing some continuing professional development (CPD) programs.

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