THE STRENGTH OF USING TEACHING KITS IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH SUBJECT GOVERNMENT - BASED PRE-SCHOOLS THROUGH THE TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE.

Nur Atiqah @ Roselinie Bt. Razak

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The Strength of Using Teaching Kits in the Teaching of
English Subject Government - Based Pre-Schools
Through the Teachers’ Perspective.

by

NUR ATIQAH @ ROSELINIE BT. RAZAK.
(11365)

BACHELOR of EDUCATION (ESL)
FACULTY of COGNITIVE SCIENCES and HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK

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(Signature of Supervisor)

Yvonne M. Campbell

(Name of Supervisor)

Date: 26/5/07
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak  
Kota Samarahan

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Mdm Yvonne M. Campbell
Abstract

In the era of science and modern technology, it is vital that we always prepare ourselves and our younger generations with as much knowledge and abilities as possible so that we are not left behind. There are various aspects that will direct educators help learners to acquire knowledge and skills successfully. One of it is by the usage of teaching-kits. Thus, with the same interest, this study intended to investigate the strength of using teaching-kits during the teaching of English language in the government-based pre-schools.

The main focus of this study was also to investigate the types of teaching-kits that are appropriate and meaningful for learners in these government-based pre-schools. The information obtained from this study shows that the respondents involved in this study agreed that teaching-kits are a vital element during the teaching-learning process in pre-schools. This is especially vital because pre-school learners are those of very young age. The benefits obtained cover aspects such as the ability to boost learners’ motivation, learners’ capability in memorising the knowledge during the lesson, the ability to sustain learners’ attention span during the lesson and other inspiring benefits.

However, there are still many other aspects and areas that need to be investigated in relation to this matter. Nonetheless, it is the hope that this study can help pre-school teachers and student-teachers in apprehending their tasks as educators.
Abstrak


Manfaat yang diperolehi daripada penggunaan alat-bantu-mengajar merangkumi keupayaan untuk mencetus motivasi pelajar, keupayaan pelajar mengingati bahan pelajaran, keupayaan untuk mengkalkan pencerahanan pelajar tehadap pelajaran dan pelbagai manfaat lain.

Walaubagai manapun, masih banyak lagi aspek lain yang perlu dikaji berkaitan dengan perkara ini. Namun, diharap agar kajian ini dapat dijadikan panduan bagi para pendidik dan kal pendidik dalam menangani tugas-tugas mereka.
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Thank you.
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List of Abbreviations

KEMAS  Kementerian Pembangunan Sosial

MOE    Ministry of Education

9MP    Ninth Malaysian Plan

SLA    Second Language Acquisition

L2     Second language
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.0 Introduction.

This chapter discusses the background of the study, statement of problem, research objectives, research questions, significance, definitions and limitations of this study.

1.5 Background of the Study.

The global technology advancement has great impact in all aspects of our life. This advancement has also presented various demands upon schools and various changes have been initiated within the education system of Malaysia in order to meet these demands.

The Malaysian government has provided various opportunities for the benefits of Malaysian citizens academically. Being aware the importance of educating children from an early age, the government has provided government-based pre-schools for the younger generation.

The purpose of these pre-schools is to educate children from the age of four years old. Previously, pre-schools were established by Kementerian Pembangunan Sosial (KEMAS) and many other private agencies. Unlike government-based education institutions; pre-schools established under the private agencies and KEMAS are required to pay school fees and some other payments according to the pre-schools’ administration needs and other requirements. In other words, children have to pay in
order to attend pre-school education. The requirements are such as buying of books, Materials used during teaching-learning activities, food supplies and other necessities.

The government-based pre-schools are established alongside the primary schools. However at the time of this study was done, not all schools are given the opportunity to provide pre-school. There are several criteria to abide to in order to obtain this privilege. The choice of schools have pre-school is those schools in the interior, rural, suburban and urban areas. The schools are those that do not have other kindergarten operators. These schools are also to ensure that the registration of Year One pupils for the following year is more than 15 pupils. In accordance to this, each class is supposedly to have 25 pupils.

These selected schools are given the convenience of renovating or building classrooms to accommodate pre-school class or classes. The school can also request from the local community for support. The pupils eligible for pre-school education are Malaysian citizens, aged 5 and 5+ years of age. The priority is given to those from low income families and those who are dependant of parents or guardians. The government provides various aids for these schools. An example is providing food aid whereby the government allocated RM 1.50 per pupil per day and this covers up to 200 days of schooling days.

The objectives of these government-based pre-schools are to provide learning experiences to children between the ages of four to six years old to develop their potentials in all aspects of growth, master basic skills and instills positive attitudes to prepare them for entry into the primary education.

As cited from the Ministry of Education’s (MOE) website dated 18 December 1991, the Cabinet had held a meeting to discuss this matter and MOE has
implemented the pre-schools programme upon consensus. Education Pilot Project was set up. A number of 1,131 classes were set up for the purpose. The pre-schools’ education in the National Education System is underlined in the Education Act 1996. Finally, on the 6 June 2001, after another cabinet meeting, expansion of MOE’s pre-schools programme was established.

In the effort to ensure the success of pre-school education, much emphasis is advocated. The recent Ninth Malaysian Plan (9MP) clearly indicates the government’s seriousness towards the implementation of these pre-schools. (Refer to Table 1). As illustrated in the table, years 2001 until 2010, RM 807.3 million is allocated for these pre-schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>8MP Expenditure</th>
<th>9MP Allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>37,922.0</td>
<td>40,356.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre school</td>
<td>215.7</td>
<td>807.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Education</td>
<td>6,369.3</td>
<td>4,837.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Education</td>
<td>8,748.1</td>
<td>6,792.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government &amp; Government- aided Schools</td>
<td>7,931.2</td>
<td>5,549.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Education</td>
<td>433.1</td>
<td>614.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARA Junior Science Colleges</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government &amp; Government – aided Schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Technical &amp; Vocational)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary Education</td>
<td>13,403.9</td>
<td>16,069.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Education</td>
<td>1,368.1</td>
<td>677.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Educational Support Programmes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>4,450.9</td>
<td>4,792.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Training</td>
<td>3,930.6</td>
<td>4,103.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Training</td>
<td>168.6</td>
<td>179.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Training</td>
<td>361.7</td>
<td>609.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>42,372.9</td>
<td>45,149</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Ninth Malaysian Plan 2006 – 2010 Chapter 11.
Adapted from Economic Plan Unit.
The MOE has also provided various facilities, materials or resources to be used in every education institutions in Malaysia and this includes those government-based pre-schools. These privileges therefore sought both teachers’ and learners’ commitment in order to produce impressive results and achievements. Teachers as well as learners of pre-schools are to ensure that the objectives outlined for them are achieved. In addition to this, teachers are responsible to possess the ability to adapt and adopt the available resources or materials in their teaching process.

It is the teachers’ responsibility that learners’ needs are taken care of to ensure the purposes of learning are achieved to its possible limits. In comprehending this, the most popular way is to use teaching-kits during the teaching-learning process. Similar to any other teaching-learning processes, teaching-kits play a major role in helping teachers impart knowledge and in ensuring the success of the teaching-learning process. This applies to the teaching-learning in the pre-schools as well. It is especially important as pre-school deals with children of young age.

Teachers should be aware that small children’s concentration time span is less than the adults’. Brown (2001) stressed that it is essential that teachers are able to maintain their students’ attention towards the teaching-learning process. Willing (1988) as cited in Nunan (1989), emphasised that a teacher who is sensitive to and accommodates the learners’ preferences for learning styles and strategies can bring about ‘improved learner satisfaction and attainment.’

In relation to teaching-learning processes, teachers’ role in ensuring that the learning environment is conducive and appropriate for their learners is vital. Eyring, as cited in Celce-Murcia (1991), clearly stated ‘in order to arouse learners’ interest, understanding and commitments in their learning, teachers consider it crucial to utilise
the resources provided in the school during the teaching-learning processes. Eyring (1991) further stressed that 'utilising relias or materials help learners in remembering important items, events and information. Teachers must be able to determine the most suitable and beneficial way to impart knowledge or objectives of their teachings. Without ensuring the appropriateness or suitability of the teaching-kits used it is therefore not a worthwhile attempt'. Substantiating this claim, Krashen (1987), as cited in Rivers (1989) suggested that the use of resources such as tapes and aural media can be an excellent supplementary source of comprehensible input.

1.5 Statement of Problem.

Studies have showed that the uses of teaching-kits, especially during the early years are more effective. However, there are still uncertainties about the pre-schools teachers’ perspective towards the strength of using teaching-kits during the teaching-learning processes. Thus, the strength of using teaching-kits in teaching English language in the pre-schools through the pre-schools teachers’ perspective is the focus of this study. Other than that, this study attempts to find out the types of teaching-kits most appropriate or suitable for these learners during the teaching-learning processes also through the pre-schools teachers’ perspective.

1.5 Research Objectives.

This study aims to find out:

- The strength of using teaching-kits through the pre-schools teachers’ perspective.
The types of teaching-kits most suitable for teaching of English language through the pre-schools teachers' perspective.

1.4 Conceptual Framework.

For the benefit of this research, the conceptual framework in Table 1.4(a) is formulated to illustrate the relationship between the teaching kits, teachers and learners.

What determines the choice of teaching kits is presented by the arrow Teacher’s choices of preparations depend a lot on the kinds of learners the teacher is faced with. The learners’ success in their learning is therefore dependent on the teachers and materials as well as the techniques that teachers apply during the teaching-learning processes. In other words, the teachers’ ability to accommodate or comprehend learners’ learning needs greatly affect the success or failure of the lesson. The choice of teaching kits, on the other hand, is not only dependent on the objective of the lesson but also on its appropriateness.

Table 1.4(a) Relationship between teaching-kits, Teacher and Learners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEARNER</th>
<th>CHOICE OF TEACHING-KITS</th>
<th>TEACHERS' LESSON PLANS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Goals of the lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs</td>
<td></td>
<td>Field knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indications:
- - - - - Dependent variables.
- - - - Inferring variables.
In reference to table 1.4(a), the success of achieving the objective(s) of any lesson; teacher, learner and teaching kits are inter-dependent. Table 1.4(a) clearly illustrates the importance of teachers obtaining prior knowledge about their learners and the learners' learning needs. This should be obtained even before starting their teaching and learning sessions.

1.5 Research Questions.

This study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. Do the teachers use teaching -kits in teaching English language?
2. What they think about it?
3. What types do they use?
4. Which ones are the most appropriate for the teaching of English language?

1.6 Significance of the Study.

There is several significance of this study identified from this study that are beneficial for those involved in the teaching profession; particularly for the pre-school teachers, as well as for designers of teaching-kits.

First and most of all is the information about the impacts of teaching-kits onto learners and the types of teaching-kits most appropriate for pre-school learners. Teachers may adopt and adapt appropriate teaching-kits that are identified in this study. Pre-school teachers may realise areas to improve in relation to the choice of teaching-kits to be used in their teaching-learning processes. It is indeed very beneficial and obliging to have information or experience shared by others in the
same field as it can become guidelines and alternatives for teachers in comprehending their tasks as teachers.

Secondly, beneficial for designers of teaching-kits who are involved in supplying them to schools. The types of teaching-kits preferred and found appropriate by these respondents can become a guideline for designers in designing teaching-kits for pre-school levels.

1.7 Definitions of terms.

Like any other academic writings, the importance of defining key terms used in writings is essential in order to provide readers what the writer intended. Here, the terms used in this study are also provided and defined for this purpose.

1.7.1 Teaching-kits:

Nesamala and her associates (2002) explained teaching-kits as ‘all instruments, reliax, materials or technologies which are used during the teaching learning processes.’

They have exemplified television, radio, film, film-slides, charts, books or printed materials, transparencies, overhead-projector, computers, teachers' own materials and real objects or animals as what are called teaching-kits that can be used in the classroom during teaching-learning process.

Canning (2000) further exemplified pictures, perceptions, mental images, figures, impressions, likeness, replicas, reproductions or anything that would help a learner see an immediate meaning can be categorised under teaching-kits.
1.7.2 Second language (L2):

Nesamala and her associates (2002) clarified that English is the main language of commerce and there are many signs, advertisements, etc. found everywhere in the urban areas. So English can be termed as a L2 in Malaysian towns. In rural areas, however, English is a foreign language because the rural children have very little environment support in their learning of English.

1.7.3 Lesson:

Richards (2000) described lesson as a learning event in which all the activities are orchestrated to serve one central pedagogic aim.

1.7.4 Learning style:

Learning style according to Krashen, as cited in Rivers 1989, is a conscious knowledge, or ‘knowing about’ language. Nesamala and her associates (2002) simplified learning style as ‘ways learners prefer to go about learning.

1.7.5 Acquisition:

The following is Krashen’s (cited in Rivers, 1989) explanation on acquisition:

‘...subconscious process that is identical to the process used in first language acquisition in all important ways. While acquisition is taking place, acquirer is not always aware of it, and he or she is not usually aware of its results.’
1.7.6 Visuals:

The concept of defining what constitutes a visual is by nature complex. A visual is any projected or non-projected image that can be classified into illustrations, visuals, pictures, perceptions, mental images, figures, impressions, likeness, replicas, reproductions or anything that would help a learner see an immediate meaning. The visual is considered projected when it is planned for and executed with an intended meaning. (Canning, 2000).

1.8 Limitations of the Study.

This study had its limitations due to several factors which are unavoidable. First and foremost, the limitation that regards to the samples chosen for this study. The samples are limited to only a few samples; seven teachers teaching in seven different pre-schools only. Thus may not be representatives for the whole pre-schools teacher population in Malaysia or other settings.

Secondly, the research only focuses on the perspectives of government-based preschool teachers concerning the strength of using teaching-kits in the teaching-learning process thus may not be representative for the whole pre-school established by the private sectors or semi-government agencies such as KEMAS as well as other government-based pre-schools.

1.9 Conclusion.

Among other aspects that we have discussed in this chapter, we have briefly discussed about learners, teachers and materials in this chapter. The relationship between these three has long been the interest of many researchers for various
reasons. One of the reasons is to investigate factors that influence learners’ language acquisition. The next chapter discusses the types of learners, their backgrounds, learning styles, needs, motivation and other contributing factors towards their learning process in schools.
CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction.

This chapter discusses the learners and the factors that influence their learning process. This chapter also discusses the relationship between the literature review and statement of problem and the current status of the topic.

2.1 Importance of the questions asked.

Willing (1988, cited in Nunan, 1989) stated that a teacher who is sensitive to and accommodates learners’ preferences for learning styles and strategies can bring about ‘learner satisfaction and attainment’.

Learning styles, strategies and learners’ preferences in relation to learning have long been the investigated by many researcher of the field. Nonetheless, these three aspects are not the only aspects or areas that researchers study in order to unfold the factors concerning Second Language Acquisition (SLA).

According to Schumann (cited in Richards, 1978) factors that influences SLA can be categorised under several factors namely; social, personality, affective, cognitive style and personal factors. Now the list shows that factors such as biological, aptitude, input and instructional factors are also included. All these factors have been the main areas that are repeatedly investigated in relation to SLA and on how to encourage successful SLA among learners. Table 2.1 on the next page illustrates the taxonomy of these factors that influences SLA.