

English Language Learning Media as an Indicator Competence of Pre-Service Early Childhood Education Teachers in Teaching Practice

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the implementation of English learning media designed by prospective Early Childhood Education teacher students at the University of Mataram, West Nusa Tenggara Province, and relate it to their teaching competence. The study used a qualitative descriptive approach with 20 students in the sixth semester of the Early Childhood Study Program. Data were obtained through observations of media use practices, documentation, and interviews. Data analysis techniques use the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. The results showed that most students were competent in designing and implementing learning media, especially regarding visual appeal, suitability for children's ages, and media durability and safety. However, two aspects were also found that still needed to be improved: media integration with learning activities and the effectiveness of delivering English vocabulary. In conclusion, although the implementation of media in general reflects the readiness of students as prospective Early Childhood teachers, strengthening integrative and communicative teaching strategies is still needed to improve the quality of English learning for early childhood as a whole

Key Word:

English learning media, early childhood, pre-service Early Childhood students, teaching competence

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Introduction

English learning at an early age is one of the important aspects of 21st-century education. Early childhood has extraordinary potential in mastering new languages through concrete experiences, playing, and the use of fun media (Winola, 2021). In this context, prospective Early Childhood Education teacher students need to be equipped with the ability not only to master basic English, but also to design and implement learning media that are by the characteristics of child development. One of the competency indicators that prospective PAUD teachers must have is the ability to design and use effective and interesting learning media, especially in learning English as a foreign language (Adisti, Ria, 2016).

Prospective PAUD teacher students at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Mataram are a group that is in the early stages of strengthening pedagogical and professional competencies. At this stage, students begin to integrate the theories they have acquired with real practices in the context of early childhood learning. One of the main competencies developed through this course is the ability to design learning media that are not only interesting and interactive, but also contextual and under the needs of child development. Lectures not only emphasize the theoretical aspects of English, but more on how the material can be packaged communicatively through various media that can stimulate children's active involvement, such as interactive games, picture cards, hand puppets, songs, and short videos in English (Paul, 2006).

Learning media is a tool used in the learning process to convey material, which can stimulate interest in learning and facilitate students' understanding of the subject matter (Pinter, 2024). In learning English for early childhood, media such as pictures, songs, vocabulary cards, hand puppets, and animated videos are highly recommended because they follow children's learning styles, which are concrete and contextual (Sukmawati *et al.*, 2023). The use of appropriate media can create a fun and meaningful learning atmosphere and strengthen children's memory of the foreign vocabulary being taught.

The competencies of prospective PAUD teacher students include pedagogical, professional, personality, and social abilities (Permendiknas No 16 2007, 2007). One real form of mastery of these competencies can be seen in how students design and implement media in the learning process. According to Nurhadi *et al.*, (2022), the use of learning media by students can reflect their ability to understand children's characteristics, develop creative learning strategies, and create a conducive learning environment. Therefore, evaluation of media implementation can be used as one of the indicators in assessing the competence of prospective teachers, especially in the early stages of forming teaching skills in lectures.

Research conducted by Channa (2012) showed that students who were given the task of developing learning media in the Early Childhood English course showed a significant increase in aspects of creativity, self-confidence, and skills in delivering material. This strengthens the importance of the role of media in the training of prospective teachers, as well as the urgency to make media implementation part of the assessment of their competence. Therefore, this study is relevant to see the relationship between the implementation of English learning media and the competence of prospective teacher students in classroom practice.

Therefore, the implementation of media designed by students in learning practice functions as a means of learning English for early childhood and a form of assessment of the students' competence. Through the process of designing, presenting, and reflecting on the media used, students are measured to what extent they understand the characteristics of students, can develop creative strategies for delivering material, and have sensitivity to the dynamics of Early Childhood classes. The quality of the media produced reflects the level of ability in developing active and meaningful learning, and shows how student teachers transform theoretical knowledge into appropriate pedagogical practices. Thus, students' ability to implement English learning media can be used as an important indicator in assessing their professional readiness as prospective teachers who are competent, creative, and responsive to the needs of early childhood.

Methods

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach to describe the implementation of English learning media by prospective Early Childhood teachers and linking it to their teaching competencies. The qualitative approach is considered appropriate for this study because the focus of the study lies in understanding the phenomena that occur naturally in the lecture environment, without manipulation, and emphasizing the meaning, process, and context. The subjects of the study were 20 sixth-semester students in the Early Childhood Department at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Mataram, who were taking the English for Early Childhood course. The students were given the task of designing and implementing English learning media as part of the lecture evaluation.

Data collection techniques were carried out through observation of student activities during presentations or media usage practices, documentation of the media work they created, and interviews with students and lecturers in charge of the course. The instruments used included an observation guide containing indicators of media implementation in the form of media suitability for children's age, creativity, effectiveness in conveying vocabulary, interview guidelines, and documentation sheets. The data analysis technique used data reduction, data presentation, and concluding as stated by Miles and Huberman 1994 (Hasanah and Ulya, 2020). The data reduction stage was carried out by sorting and simplifying data from observations, documentation, and interviews to focus on aspects that were relevant to the research objectives. Data presentation was carried out in narrative descriptive form to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusions were drawn by identifying patterns and relationships between the implementation of learning media and student teaching competencies. To maintain data validity, triangulation techniques were used, both technical and source triangulation, so that the data obtained was more accurate and reliable.

Results and Discussion

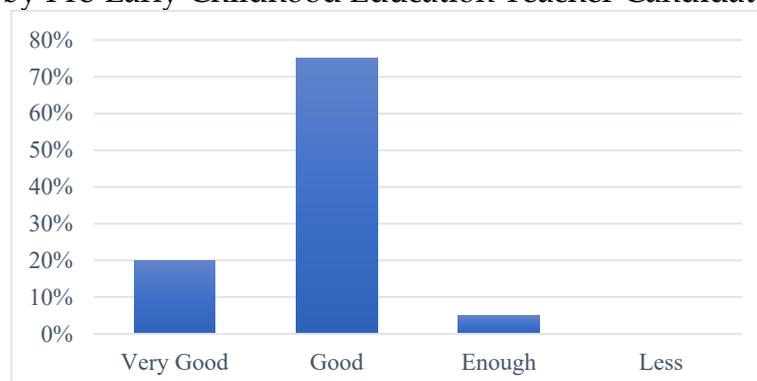
In this study, the assessment of the implementation of English learning media by prospective Early Childhood teachers focused on ten main aspects that reflect the quality of media planning and implementation in the early childhood learning process. These aspects are arranged based on pedagogical principles that are relevant to the characteristics of child development and the needs of English learning at an early age level. The following is a table of the aspects assessed in this study:

Table 1. Assessment of English Language Learning Media by Pre-Early Childhood Education Teacher

No	Assessed Aspects
1	Suitability for children's age
2	Creativity and uniqueness of media
3	Visual appeal
4	Child involvement
5	Clarity of material
6	Appropriateness of media use
7	Effectiveness of English vocabulary delivery
8	Integration with learning activities
9	Media durability and safety
10	Student reflection and evaluation after implementation

Based on the table above, implementation and assessment observations are made, and conclusions are obtained from each aspect, which are presented in the percentage graph below.

Diagram 1. Percentage of Implementation of English Language Learning Media by Pre-Early Childhood Education Teacher Candidates



Based on the recapitulation assessment results of 20 students in implementing English learning media for early childhood, a general picture was obtained that most students showed "Good" competence, namely 15 students. This can be seen from the total score obtained by each student, most of which were in the range of 31-35, with the "Good" category, and 4 others reached the range of 36-40, which was classified as "Very Good". Meanwhile, only one student got a score in the range of 21-30 with the "Enough" category.

Based on the analyzed data, there are ten aspects of student assessment in designing and implementing English learning media for early childhood. First, in terms of suitability to the child's age, students have generally been able to adapt learning media to the developmental characteristics of children aged 5-6 years, as seen from the high and even scores. This shows their understanding of children's cognitive and emotional needs, as emphasized by Wright (1995). Furthermore, in terms of creativity and uniqueness of the media, students are quite successful in presenting original ideas that are not monotonous, although there are still opportunities for exploring more unique ideas (Yunus *et al.*, 2011). The aspect of visual appeal occupies the highest position in the assessment, indicating that the appearance of the media in terms of color, shape, and aesthetics is very attractive to children and contributes greatly to increasing their interest in learning (Penelitian, Pretty and Ningsih, 2020).

In terms of children's involvement, the designed media can encourage active participation, although the interactive approach can still be more varied so that children's involvement is more optimal (Via Cahya Bulan, Sofia Fitriyani and Deni Widjayatri, 2023). Meanwhile, the clarity of the material shows that students are quite capable of compiling English material that is clear, focused, and follows learning objectives, as stated by Triyanto and Astuti (2021). In terms of the appropriateness of media use, it can be seen that the media is used appropriately according to the planned learning activity flow, reflecting the readiness and contextuality of implementation (Maulana, Zaizafun Ismi and Indonesia Banda Aceh, 2020).

However, in terms of the effectiveness of delivering English vocabulary, it was found that although media can help children get to know new vocabulary, its effectiveness in helping children understand or remember vocabulary still needs to be

improved. The aspect of integration with learning activities also shows that although media has functioned as an aid, its use has not been fully integrated into the entire teaching and learning process. Students need to deepen their understanding of how to make media a core part of learning, not just a complement. On the other hand, the aspect of media durability and safety consistently received high ratings, indicating that students have paid attention to the safety and durability of the media, so that it does not endanger children. Finally, in reflection and evaluation, students demonstrated the ability to reflect on the advantages and disadvantages of the media they created. This awareness is an important capital for improving and increasing their competence in the future.



Picture 1. English Learning Media Created by Pre-Early Childhood Education Teacher Candidate Students

The results of English learning media by prospective teacher students show a positive tendency, especially in the aspect of visual appeal. The high average score in this indicator reflects the students' ability to design media that is aesthetic, colorful, and has a visual design that suits the interests and characteristics of early childhood. In the context of cognitive and affective development of children aged 5–6 years, the visual aspect does play an important role in building focus and interest in learning materials (Apsari, Lisdawati and Mulyani, 2020). The use of attractive illustrations, bright contrasting colors, and shapes that are familiar to children are the main strengths of the media produced by prospective teacher students (Benson and Ward, 2013). This shows that they already have aesthetic sensitivity and an understanding of the importance of visual stimuli in the learning process of early childhood. In addition, a high score on the aspect of media durability and safety indicates that students have carefully considered the use of materials that are not only attractive but also safe and durable (Resti and Rachmijati, 2020). They showed concern for child safety factors by

avoiding sharp, small, or easily damaged materials that could potentially harm users. This approach reflects a good understanding of an educator's responsibility in creating a safe and child-friendly learning environment, and is an indicator of their readiness to enter the professional world as prospective teachers.

However, the results obtained also show that several aspects still need strengthening, namely the integration of media with learning activities and the effectiveness of delivering English vocabulary. Lower scores on the integration aspect indicate that some students still see media as additional tools, not as an integral part of the learning strategy (Suryana *et al.*, 2021). This can be seen from how the media is used partially and not fully integrated with the flow of the designed learning activities. Likewise, in terms of vocabulary delivery, although the media is attractive and safe, not all students have succeeded in maximizing the potential of the media to support children's understanding of new vocabulary effectively. This could be due to a lack of variation in vocabulary reinforcement methods, minimal use of repetition in meaningful contexts, or a lack of exploration in activities that encourage children to actively practice language (Fitriani *et al.*, 2022).

Based on the overall results of English learning media by prospective Early Childhood teacher, it can be concluded that the majority of students have demonstrated good competence in designing and implementing media that are appropriate to the characteristics of early childhood. Aspects such as visual appeal, safety, and suitability for the child's age are the main strengths that reflect their readiness as professional educators. However, there are still several aspects that require further attention, especially in terms of media integration into overall learning activities and the effectiveness of delivering English vocabulary. Therefore, there needs to be a follow-up in the form of strengthening more integrative and communicative learning strategies. It is hoped that through continuous evaluation and responsive curriculum development, students can continue to improve their competence so that they can create a fun, meaningful, and effective English learning experience for early childhood (Dewi and Kareviati, 2021).

Conclusion

The use of English learning media by prospective Early Childhood teacher students showed positive and promising results. Most students scored in the "Good" to "Very Good" category, especially in terms of visual appeal, media durability, safety, and suitability for the child's age. This reflects the students' ability to understand the characteristics of early childhood development and apply them in the form of creative, interesting, and safe media.

However, there are still two main aspects that need further attention, namely: 1) Integration of media with learning activities is still partial and not fully integrated with the flow of learning activities; and 2) Effectiveness of English vocabulary delivery, which is still less than optimal in supporting children's understanding and mastery of vocabulary.

This condition shows that although students have mastered the basics of media design, strategic understanding in integrating media into the learning process as a whole still needs to be strengthened.

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