

## Digital vs Conventional: Elementary School English Teacher's Preference in Learning Media Utilization

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### Abstract

Learning media is one of important aspects in learning, especially in learning English, to help students understand the learning materials easily. With the rapid development of digital technology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, integration of digital technology in learning English is worthwhile. However, not all English teachers are interested in the digital technology learning media because some of them prefer using conventional learning media. Because of those reasons, this study aims at exploring elementary school English teachers' preference on digital and conventional learning media utilization. Using descriptive qualitative study, 10 elementary school English teachers from 10 elementary schools in Bangkalan, Madura were involved in-depth interview. The result shows that four teachers preferred conventional learning media, a teacher preferred digital learning media, and five teachers preferred conventional and digital learning media. However, in its implementation, teachers who preferred conventional or digital learning media encountered their own challenges, such as having limited facilities and skills, chaotic classroom management, and technical errors.

**Keywords:** Digital Technology, Conventional, Learning Media, Preference, English, Elementary School

### Abstrak

Media pembelajaran merupakan salah satu aspek penting dalam pembelajaran, terutama pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, untuk membantu siswa memahami materi dengan mudah. Di abad ke-21 di mana teknologi digital berkembang pesat, integrasi teknologi digital dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris sangat bermanfaat. Akan tetapi, tidak semua guru bahasa Inggris tertarik menggunakannya karena beberapa dari mereka lebih memilih untuk menggunakan media pembelajaran konvensional. Berdasarkan hal tersebut, penelitian untuk mengetahui preferensi guru terhadap penggunaan media pembelajaran konvensional dan digital. Menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, 10 guru bahasa Inggris dari 10 SD berbeda di tiga wilayah di Bangkalan, Madura, terlibat dalam wawancara mendalam. Hasilnya adalah terdapat empat guru yang lebih suka menggunakan media pembelajaran konvensional, satu guru lebih suka media pembelajaran digital, dan lima guru lebih suka media pembelajaran konvensional dan digital. Akan tetapi dalam pelaksanaannya, guru-guru tersebut menghadapi beberapa tantangan, seperti memiliki fasilitas dan keterampilan terbatas, pengaturan kelas yang kacau, dan terjadi kesalahan teknis selama penggunaannya.

**Kata kunci:** Teknologi Digital, Konvensional, Media Pembelajaran, Preferensi, Bahasa Inggris, SD

## INTRODUCTION

Learning media use is essential as a tool for helping students learn some subjects. Utilizing learning media, teachers can help students by providing illustration of the materials and creating fun and attractive learning activities in class (Preeti, 2014). As a foreign language, English taught to elementary students can be more comprehensible when utilizing appropriate learning media. However, some teachers sometimes overlook the use of learning media in English class as they think that using learning media is time consuming. According to a study conducted by Rachmadtullah, et al. (2018), the teachers participating in the study state that it takes time for them to prepare the learning materials because they have to decide appropriate media as well as the price of the media used. Instead of preparing learning media, achieving learning objectives in every topic of the materials is more important since they require to achieving the objectives that indicate they have fulfilled the syllabus successfully (Mai, 2020). As a result, the absence of learning media influences students' engagement in class.

In Indonesian context, learning is not limited to delivering materials and achieving the learning goals in the syllabus, but it is also to provide direct experience for students so that the learning can be more meaningful. Stated by Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (2022), learning should provide qualified, interactive, and contextual meaningful learning as it empowers students to encounter their daily life problems. To achieve the meaningful learning, teachers play the key roles in planning interactive, inspirational, enjoyable, challenging, motivating, and engaging learning. One of which is making a decision in providing appropriate and supporting learning media so that the students can engage more in learning English.

Utilizing learning media, teachers are free to determine using conventional or digital-technology-integrated learning media. Since the vast development of technology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, technology-integrated learning media has frequently evolved in learning English as students nowadays belong to Z generation. As Z generation, they are called digital natives who have been familiar with digital technology use and finding much information from it (Szymkowiak et al., 2021). Since learning should match the students' characteristics, it is better for teachers to integrate digital technology in English learning. Szymkowiak, et al. (2021) argue, teachers are the role models for their students. When they adopt technology in learning, their students are likely to utilize it for the similar purpose. Despite the fact that digital technology causes negative impacts on students, digital technology use in learning can influence students' learning. Digital technology integrated learning media can encourage students to learn English more effectively and lively (Azmi, 2017; Ghavifekr et al., 2015; Kessler, 2017). Not only influencing the learning activities in class, they can become a medium to develop students' English skills, creativity, confident, and motivation (Ahmadi, 2018; Mai, 2020).

On the other hand, the negative perceptions on technology integration in learning has overlooked the benefits of it. Some of them perceive that utilizing technology-integrated learning media can increase their workload because they have to consider some aspects, such as the number of students in a class, the time allocation for teaching a particular topic, resources, and supporting facilities (Hockly, 2014). It is also arguable that it provides authentic learning experience since they are addicted to the screen instead of doing interaction among students as well as the teacher (Moorhouse, 2023). A study conducted by Kancanadana, et al. (2021) also disputes that technology-integrated learning media influences students' physical and social development. Their ability to have active psychical and socialization can decrease. As a result, the development of students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills will be imbalance.

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Despite the vast of technology-integrated learning media utilization in this 21<sup>st</sup> century era learning, the utilization of conventional learning media still becomes another option for some English teachers. In order knowing elementary school English teachers' preference in utilizing digital and conventional learning media in English class, the researcher conducts this study. Moreover, this study will reveal some obstacles and solutions while utilizing the digital and conventional learning media in English class.

## METHOD

This study is a qualitative study which aim is to reveal teachers' attitude towards digital learning media utilization descriptively. The source of the data were from the result of in-depth interview with 10 English elementary school teachers in Bangkalan, Madura. The teachers involved in this study are labelled as T1 up to T10. They were elementary school English teachers in three different regions in Bangkalan. They were randomly selected using random sampling technique. After collecting the data, the data were then analyzed base on the data analysis for a qualitative study. First, the data were transcribed and highlighted in some important points from the interview. Second, the researcher generates initial codes from the transcribed and highlighted data. Third, the researcher classified the data into some themes, and then reviewed and refining the themes. The last, the researcher interpreted and reported the final analysis of the data in the form of study report.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The findings and discussion present some data and supporting theories about the teachers' preference in utilizing digital or conventional learning media and the obstacles and solutions they did while utilizing the learning media in their class.

### Teachers' Preference on Utilizing Digital or Conventional Learning Media

Regarding the data obtained from in-depth interview, the ten English teachers participating in this study stated that learning media was an essential part of learning because it could help students understand the materials easier. However, their preference towards learning media utilization in their class is different. Based on the data, the teachers' preference on learning media use refers to three groups, i.e. four teachers who prefer using digital learning media, a teacher who prefers using conventional learning media, and five teachers who prefer utilizing both kinds of learning media.

#### *Conventional Learning Media*

Among the ten English teachers, four teachers (T1, T2, T5, and T9) from different school stated that they preferred using conventional than digital learning media. First, T1 taught English to his students by using flash cards and sticky cards that consisted of pictures and vocabulary. He thought that the students became enthusiastic in playing the cards while learning English. Utilizing those cards, the class was more exciting than the class that did not use any learning media. He also argued that utilizing digital technology learning media did not guarantee that they learning could be more effective and livelier. Since the school's facilities did not support the implementation of digital technology learning media (e.g., laptop and projector), he decided to make conventional learning media to help students understand the materials, especially for learning pronunciation and speaking.

Moreover, T2 stated that she utilized conventional learning media in her English class. Similar with T1's school, the facilities in T2's school was inadequate to support students using digital learning media. Despite the limitation, T2 then utilized the conventional learning

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media (e.g. flash cards or pictures) in a game. She asserted that the students were enthusiastic and actively collaborated with their classmates. Therefore, the English class was still exciting for the students.

Different from T1's and T2's school, T5's school was equipped with digital technology, such as projector and the LCD. She even utilized a video and some audios to help students learn English in her class. She also agreed that utilizing digital learning media was interesting that it could make students interested in learning English. Nevertheless, utilizing digital learning media causing only some students focused and understood the materials delivered by her. Then, she decided to use conventional learning media combined with a game. The result was that the students interacted more than when using digital media. They also actively had asking and answering activities while doing the game. In other words, digital learning media might be interesting for students, but it provided limited interaction and physical activities for the students. Meanwhile, the elementary school students were required to training their affective and psychomotor skills, not only their cognitive skills.

Similar with T5, T9 explained that she used to utilizing digital and conventional learning media in her class. She would utilize pictures and cards as the conventional learning media, and videos for digital learning media. When she used the conventional media, the students' response was so-so. On the other hand, when she utilized digital learning media, the students became happier and more enthusiastic in learning English. In the interview, she explained that it would be better to utilize digital learning media in teaching English to her students, but she thought that utilizing digital media spent more time than using the conventional media. Whereas, she required to achieve some learning goals at the end of the semester. For the efficiency reason, she preferred using the conventional learning media.

## ***Digital Learning Media***

The second group consists of a teacher (T3) who prefers digital technology learning media use in English learning. One of the reasons why she preferred utilizing digital technology learning media was that the class became more exciting for the students. She added that the students were bored when they only learned materials without illustrating the concepts using learning media. For instance, when the materials were about learning new vocabulary and grammar, students were confused understanding the concepts because they could not illustrate the real context of using a particular formula in a sentence or in a dialogue. On the other hand, when she showed a short video taken from YouTube or pictures in the LCD projector, the students could illustrate the real use of the formula more easily. Moreover, the students seemed to be more enthusiastic in the learning process. Not only using videos and pictures, T3 frequently presented the materials in Microsoft PowerPoint equipped with some animation on it. The purpose was to make students more engaged in the learning process.

Moreover, T3 explained that because her school provided good learning facilities, including technology facilities, it was worthwhile to optimize the technology facility utilization in order to support students in learning English. From the facilities, the students were also able to access the facilities to find more learning resources. Therefore, the knowledge was not limited to the materials taught in the class.

## ***Conventional and Digital Learning Media***

The elementary school English teachers who thought that conventional and digital learning media combination could be the best solution in teaching English were T4, T6, T7, T8, and T10. The five teachers in this group shared the similar preference that they hardly decided digital or conventional learning media since the integration of digital and

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conventional learning media could be complementary media. For digital learning media, they frequently utilized some videos and audios to help them explain the materials easily. Showing pictures from the internet through the LCD projectors were also another thing they provided in the class. In addition, she used some additional websites (e.g. Quizizz and Quipper) to support students learning as what T6 did in her class. In this case, the students responded very well. They could enthusiastically involve in the learning process.

Regarding the data, each teacher has their own preference in utilizing conventional or digital learning media in their class. Teachers who preferred utilizing conventional learning media in teaching English assumed that conventional learning media could be efficient since they did not have to spend much time to prepare for the media. In a particular situation, even though the school supported the use of digital technology in learning, they still preferred to utilize conventional learning media. The result of this study is in line with a statement by Hockly and Dudeney (2018) explaining that having access to digital technology facilities did not guarantee that it would be integrated in learning process. Unless the teachers wanted to integrate it in the learning process, the digital technology facilities remained useless.

In the contrary, teachers who integrated digital technology in their learning had seen it as a good opportunity in encouraging their students' motivation and engagement during the learning process (Azmi, 2017; Mahdum & Safriyanti, 2019; Santoso et al., n.d.). Some of the data also showed that the teachers believed that by integrating digital technology learning media, learning English could be more effective since they could provide various media, such as PPT, videos, laptop, and even internet for the students (Kalazandeh et al., 2014; Kessler, 2017).

## **Obstacles and Solutions in Utilizing Digital or Conventional Learning Media**

Despite the benefits of utilizing digital or conventional learning media, the teachers admitted that they found some challenges. According to the data, the obstacles found related to limited facilities and skills, classroom management, and technical error.

### ***Limited Facilities and Skills***

According to the data, one of the biggest challenges in learning media utilization in English class is on the facilities provided by the schools. As in T1's and T2's school, the learning facilities supporting the digital technology learning media were inadequate. There was not a laptop or projector to help them provide various digital learning media to the students. Therefore, they chose to use flash cards as the learning media. Another problem found in T4's class was that the laptop used to support students' learning was inadequate. Then, she overcame the problem by grouping the students so that each group could operate the laptop during the lesson.

However, utilizing conventional learning media did not mean that there was not any obstacles. Stated by T1, using learning media could be time consuming since he had to prepare a lot of money and energy in order to make a media. T2 supported that creating media was difficult to deal with because she had to create different media in order to match the learning materials. Sometimes she had to spend time searching for inspiration from some social media, such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram. This reason then related to the reason explained by T9 that instead of creating learning media, focusing on learning goals at the end of the semester was more important that they had limited time to study English in class. She worried that the students could not reach the goals. Thus, conventional media was the option since she could provide pictures from the English textbook to the students.

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## *Classroom Management*

Another challenge can relate to the classroom management. T5 stated that her students could not focus and understand materials while she utilized digital media. Then, she assumed that conventional media could provide better result in her class. However, utilizing conventional media was also challenging, especially when she implemented the media in a game. The class were in chaos when the game started. Then, the only way to manage the class was that she gave some instructions clearly to the students so that they could follow the game well.

## *Technical Error*

In utilizing digital learning media, T3, T4, T7, T8, and T10 found that the major problem in utilizing the digital learning media was on the technical errors while operating it in the class. They mentioned that there were some causes effecting the technical errors, such as having error software or laptop, lost internet network, and power outage. Encountering the obstacles, they shared similar answer. First, when the laptop, application, or software used was error, they stated that they had to check the devices or software before they used it. In other words, they had to be well prepared before the class began. Second, when the internet network was unstable, there were some thoughts. They would use their mobile network to overcome the problem. Well preparation before the class began could be a way to determine whether to use mobile network or not. Third, when the power outage occurred, they stated that they could use conventional learning media to complement the limitation of utilizing digital learning media.

The use of both conventional and digital learning media can be challenging because the teachers encountered some problems in its implementation. From the data analysis, it is found that limited facilities and skills had become obstacles in utilizing learning media. The reason stated by T1 and T2 had clearly showed that limited facilities in their school had influenced their preference in choosing which learning media to use in the class. A study conducted by Aminullah et al. (2019) showed that lack of facilities in school became the main reason of not integrating digital technology in the class. Besides limited facilities, limited skills in operating digital learning media had changed teachers' preference in utilizing it (Aminullah, 2019; Mai, 2020). In this case, lack of facilities and skills could hinder teachers from utilizing learning media in English class (Junaidi et al., 2020).

In term of classroom management, the teacher (T5) got difficulties in managing the students while implementing the conventional learning media in the form of games. To overcome the problem, she only instructed the students to follow the rules of the games. She argued that using conventional learning media could make students more active in learning English. However, the utilization of digital learning media could make students more engaged in learning as teachers could provide various media and authentic materials in the form of multimedia (Azmi, 2017; Mai, 2020). Then, it could be more effective and easier for the teachers to manage the students' activities in class.

In addition, the obstacle found in the data was technical error. To overcome the problems, the teachers had to consider some aspects in the preparation stage. Kessler (2017) asserted that having good preparation before applying the learning media was crucial, such as adopting appropriate and supporting devices. Without being carefully prepared, integrating digital learning media in class would be futile (Azmi, 2017). Then, it is essential to do some preparation before choosing and using the learning media so that the teachers could obtain the benefits of utilizing the learning media despite any challenges the found during the implementation (Bai et al., 2019).

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## CONCLUSION

Learning media is one of the essential aspects in helping students understand learning materials well. Due to the importance of learning media in English learning, teachers should consider utilizing the learning media in their class. In the era where technology rapidly develops, digital learning media can be a good alternative to enhance students' learning. However, some elementary school English teachers in Bangkalan had not shifted their preference from conventional to digital learning media. Among the 10 English teachers, 4 teachers preferred using conventional learning media in their class due to the facility limitation in their school and the efficiency in creating and using the media. A teacher preferred using digital learning media since she believed that optimizing the integration of digital technology in learning could make English learning more effective and engaging. Besides, the rest of the teachers preferred using both conventional and digital learning media since they were complementary in learning. By combining both learning media, students had broader opportunities to have various learning media and resources so that they could increase their motivation and engagement in learning English. Furthermore, they could increase their English learning achievement.

Even though utilizing conventional and digital learning media could enhance students' learning, the teachers had to encounter some obstacles. First, they had to deal with limited facilities and skills while creating and using the learning media in class. Second, classroom management in utilizing conventional learning media could make students in chaos since they were required to be active during the class. To overcome the problem, the teachers could try utilizing digital learning media that the students could do learning using technology. Third, technical error, such as error software or laptop, lost internet network, and power outage, could influence learning media use. Thus, they had to prepare devices or internet network before utilizing them in the class. Not only ensuring the devices and internet networks in the preparation stage, teachers could utilize conventional learning media to overcome the problem.

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