Program evaluation of English language learning for EYL curriculum development in Indonesia: teachers' perception, challenges, and expectation

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Abstract

Program evaluation (henceforth PE) is a phase of curriculum development in the ELT context and is precious for improving curriculum reform. However, more research needs to be undertaken to investigate PE as a part of the English curriculum development for young learners' context in Indonesian elementary schools. This case study research aims to scrutinize the teachers' voices on PE centered on the challenges, perceptions, and expectations of the English to young learners (EYL) curriculum development. A semi-structured interview with three English teachers chosen by purposive sampling in Tasikmalaya, West Java, Indonesia, was employed to gather the data, and the collected data were examined thematically. The results showed that EYL teachers believe PE is vital to conduct since it can encourage curriculum development. They deal with challenges in designing and developing the curriculum related to lesson planning, materials development, instructional methods, and assessment practices. Teachers expected the EYL program to be adjusted with a suitable curriculum, such as contextualized, character-based, and school-based curricula. The study suggests that PE should be performed regularly to gain insightful reforms for the EYL curriculum, so teachers, schools, and stakeholders can advance the quality of the English program at Indonesian elementary schools.

Introduction

Within the last ten years, an upward movement of attention in learning English as a foreign language (EFL) at an earlier age has occurred apparently (Garton, 2013). This trend happens because currently, English is increasingly remarked as a fundamental competence and an asset for non-native speakers of English to succeed in life. Since access to English as a commodity is often limited, early language learning has a special social dimension. The issue of teaching English to young learners (TEYL) increased largely to be investigated and examined across the world (Copland & Garton 2014). Proficiency in English can empower learners, and learning the language early may provide better long-term access to empowerment (Nikolov, 2016). This is demonstrated by the fact that several nations employ choices for initial education to decide English subjects as mandatory or discretionary (Butler, 2015). Taiwan, an Asian country, began English for elementary school education in 2001 (Chien, 2014). Other Asian countries, such as China, Korea, and Vietnam, also empower policies on Initial English language education (Hu, 2007; Nguyen, 2011; Yim, 2016). Due to the phenomena, it can be concluded that English is vital to introduce to young learners (YLs) for their assets to master the foreign language from an early age.

In Indonesia, English in elementary school is a course that can be chosen to learn or an elective course based on the condition of the school regarding the 2013 curriculum (Hawanti, 2014). Prior to the implementation of this regulation, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) of Indonesia established the authorized policy for the inclusion of the English subject as local content in elementary schools in the MoEC Number 060/U/1993 decree, and it was formally incorporated into the required 1994 curriculum. According to the decree, English was taught in grades 4, 5, and 6 of the primary school

curriculums (Sulistyo et al., 2019). The government's 2013 curriculum policy grants primary school English instructors the freedom to create their own curriculum and assessments (Hawanti, 2014). Thus, this phenomenon brings implications to the practice of English to young learners (henceforth EYL) instructions. Another crucial facet that should be considered in this context is that EYL teachers should be trained and equipped with sufficient pedagogical and content knowledge of teaching EYL through improving their professional development (PD) such as teacher training programs, non-formal education training for teachers and conducting seminars and workshops (Zein, 2016). In conclusion, it needs significant development on the curriculum as a base for EYL teachers to develop and adjust their instructions.

In developing the curriculum, a model of Tyler's (1949) rationale can be referred to as a base for considering the change before the program evaluation (PE) is conducted. Tyler's (1949) rationale focused on the curriculum planning and development that should be relevant to the four queries relating to the assortment of educational purposes, the determination of experiences, the organization of experiences, and the provision for evaluation. One of the rationales, evaluation of the curriculum, can be examined regarding PE, which is fundamental to improving teaching program quality relating to curriculum elements. Emilia (2021) stated that evaluation becomes an important element in curriculum development. Tyler (2013) argued that the evaluation procedure could influence the importance of individual guidance of students in achieving their learning goals. Brown (1995) argued that evaluation is the heart to bond and give life to all other elements of language curriculum design. Likewise, PE, which can examine all facets of curriculum design to determine whether the course is the best it can be, can serve as a platform for curriculum improvement (Nation & Macalister, 2010). This process gathers the information to understand how the program is designed and implemented through a language course.

Unsurprisingly, PE was frequently used narrowly during its early implementations, with a principal focus on passing judgment on language programs based on experimental designs and a restricted quantitative method (e.g., Beretta & Davies, 1985). The issue of PE has received considerable critical attention. Focus on program processes (in addition to results) has significantly increased attention in this regard as language education practitioners have started to understand the benefits of broader conceptions of evaluation as a way of shaping program development (e.g., Chang et al., 2015; Fenton-Smith & Torpey, 2013; Norris, 2009). Very little published research on language PE for EFL young learner context exists. Several studies of the evaluations still focus on the process of the language program in the EFL context, teacher education

program (e.g., Chang et al., 2015; Yang, 2009). One study concerns the quantitative analysis of PE of young English language learners in the US (Llosa & Slayton, 2009). Moreover, Llosa and Slayton (2009) examined the process of PE for EYL, which influenced US K-12 education meaningfully. Former studies have not yet been concerned with the issues of teachers' challenges, perceptions, and expectations of PE through summative evaluation. This study will answer the different aims as a new insight into the EYL curriculum development.

Based on the previous studies mentioned above, due to the lack of development of curriculum concerning PE in the EYL context, to fill the gap of the previous research, it is essential to conduct the study as one of the attempts to see the teachers' voices about the language skills needed for YLs, challenges in designing and developing curriculum and expected EYL curriculum by a concept of PE which may have contributions in the future curriculum. This can scrutinize and contribute to the advantages for EYL teachers since there is no official English curriculum for EYL instructions in Indonesia. They can recognize how to develop and design a lesson plan based on the students' needs and characteristics. This should undoubtedly include teachers who have experienced the program of EYL in their current conditions and contexts as end-users. For this reason, the study described here examines the following research questions, which are in line with the objective of the study:

(1) How do the teachers perceive the program evaluation (PE) of English language learning for EYL curriculum development in Indonesia?
(2) What are the teachers' challenges in designing and developing EYL curriculum components?
(3) What curriculum do the teachers expect to teach EYL in Indonesia?

Literature review

The policy curriculum development of English to young learners in Indonesia

The existence of the English subject in Indonesian elementary schools brings the new expectation to prepare young learners (YLs) ready to face globalization, where English has been in prominent use recently. As stated by Setyarini et al. (2020), English's current status as a foreign language in Indonesia is centered on its widespread use in a wide range of areas, including politics, diplomacy, international trade and industry, business, science and technology, and education. Besides that, one of the English learning advantages from an early age may have YLs are equipped to the secondary level (Sadtono, 2007). Then, in

1989 the Ministry of Education and Culture conducted a national survey to see the needs of EYL. The result impressed to government because English should be taught and learned based on the needs regarding the importance of English for YLs. The government only followed up on the 1989 survey in 1992. At a nationwide symposium on education hosted by the MoEC, it was noted that parents were pressuring the government to prioritize elementary English instruction in public schools (Zein, 2017). Following this recommendation, the MoEC issued Decree No. 060/U/1993. The government authorized a school to teach English as a local content subject beginning in grade 4 if: (1) the society in which the school is situated; and (2) the school has qualified teachers and can guarantee adequate facilities to accommodate proper teaching-learning activities (Sadtono, 2007). At that time, the government perceived English as one of the courses that should be in elementary education's curriculum as a local content subject. Regarding the policy, the journey of TEYL in Indonesia has many changes from time to time viewed on its practice.

When English was successfully implemented in elementary school in 1994, the school had the autonomy to have the English program as a local content subject. This policy highlights the implication of the practice of EYL in Indonesia, such as the pedagogical aspects involving curriculum, materials, and teaching methods. Asriyanti et al. (2013) revealed that teachers struggled with classroom management and using English as a medium language of instruction. Hawanti (2014) argued that teachers' competencies in pedagogical content knowledge are still lacking, especially in using the textbook as a substitute for curriculum and the use of the English language.

During the reformation era, the Ministry of Education and Culture changed the policy of English courses in the 2004 curriculum. The MoEC released Decree No. 22/2006 in 2006 showed that it required English as local content for YLs. In this regulation, schools were free to conduct the English subject from grades 1 to 4. The schools should implement *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan* (henceforth KTSP) or a School-Based Curriculum (Zein, 2017). This curriculum aims to have YLs master the four competencies in language skills within the school context (Madya, 2007). In addition, in curriculum 2006, English was given to students from the fourth grade, which should be based on the student's abilities as a local content subject.

In curriculum 2013, the policy of the English subject is still the same; its policy is still a local content subject that students can learn. According to Zein (2017), English can be learned by elementary students when the schools are ready to implement it, and they can use the curriculum 2013. If the schools are not ready, they may use KTSP guidelines. In other words, the school should

consider providing learners with some crucial aspects, such as experienced English teachers, as one of the justifications for implementing it and the readiness of school curriculum components and materials.

Program evaluation in language learning

The theory of program evaluation (PE) is explained briefly based on several experts on that. Some issues have been investigated related to the development and evaluation of language learning programs in the ELT context, such as the evaluation of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in the EFL Korean context (Chang et al., 2015), an evaluation of ELT textbook materials viewed from a micro-evaluation of Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) in China (Harper & Widodo, 2018), and evaluating the effectiveness of English Academic Literacy in South Africa based on Context Adaptive Model (Mostert, 2020). This concept benefits some parties involved, from small to large scales, such as students, teachers, teacher educators, principals, schools, curriculum designers, policymakers, and the government, to improve the program occasionally. For example, a study focused on English curriculum evaluation for 6th, 7th, and 8th grades regarding the students' and teachers' opinions and challenges on the curriculum implementation in line with the instructional practices in terms of goals of learning, materials, teaching methods, assessments, student attitude (Mappiasse & Sihes, 2014). The results indicate that the current program needs to be improved, and other administrative changes are needed to encourage pupils to study the language as part of the curriculum.

Weir and Roberts (1994) differentiated between two primary purposes for language PE, program accountability and program development. A development-oriented evaluation aims to raise a program's excellence as it is implemented. It may engage both program-involved and non-involved professionals and focus on teacher development (Weir & Roberts, 1994). In line with this, Richards (2001) concluded the curriculum evaluation might emphasize many various aspects of a language program, such as the teachers; curriculum design; classroom processes; materials of instruction; the syllabus and program content; the students; learner motivation; monitoring of pupil progress, the institution; learning environment; staff development. Brown (1995) also defined evaluation as "the systematic gathering of information for purposes of making decisions" (p. 218). Kiely and Rea-Dickens (2005) make a beneficial three-way scope difference: (1) large-scale evaluations which tend to focus on major educational innovations with significant financial backing with an underlying agenda, (2) teacher-led evaluations which take aspects of the planned or intended curriculum as focal points, and (3) management-led

evaluations which improve program management. This statement is also supported by Brown (1995) who perceived that without an evaluation, the language program would not have meaningfully dealt with the lack of unity of curriculum elements and may become pointless.

To support the data analysis, summative evaluation is chosen as a base framework of PE. Language program coordinators have improved language teaching practices since the 1990s by evaluating internal and external stakeholder interests, formative and summative purposes, developmental and accountability outcomes, and various methodologies. This has been done following stakeholders' extensive evaluation scope and involvement in social and educational programs (Norris, 2009). It can answer the aim of the study, whose purpose is to find out the challenges, perceptions, and expectations of teachers in implementing the English subject at the elementary school level. It is a type of PE assessing the outcomes and effectiveness of a program after it has been implemented. It is typically conducted at the end of a program to determine whether the desired outcomes have been achieved. The design of the evaluation and the reporting of findings are two essential components of a successful language program evaluation process (Llosa & Slayton, 2009). According to Richards (2001), three kinds of program evaluations can be valuable for program development. One of them is a summative evaluation that most teachers and program administrators are familiar with and seeks to make decisions about the worth or value of different curriculum aspects. Nation and Macalister (2010) argued that summative evaluation tends to judge the course and is used to look at the results. Generally speaking, PE is a crucial tool for enhancing language learning initiatives and ensuring they are fulfilling the needs of students and communities.

Many previous studies investigated language PE variously. The majority of studies on evaluation are based on ELT context, which relied on the teacher education program or foreign language educators program (e.g., Fenton-Smith & Torpey, 2013; Karim et al., 2019; Peacock, 2009; Yang, 2009), the native or first language program evaluation and the PE of English as medium instruction (e.g., Chang et al., 2015; Harris, 2009), implementation of EFL curriculum evaluation in Indonesia (Mappiasse & Sihes, 2014), and the Communication Teaching Project Evaluation in Bangalore (Beretta & Davies, 1985). Based on previous research, the present study examined how EYL teachers believe in the PE of TEYL in Indonesia regarding the challenges and expectations of the English curriculum for YLs using the concept of summative evaluation. The evaluation findings can be used to improve program quality and support the development of YLs in learning English.

In conclusion, based on theories of PE (Richards, 2001; Nation & Macalister, 2010) and evidence from several studies on PE in ELT contexts (Fenton-Smith & Torpey, 2013; Karim et al., 2019; Llosa & Slayton, 2009; Mappiasse & Sihes, 2014; Norris, 2009; Peacock, 2009; Yang, 2009), PE can give an insightful contribution to the development of the whole language curriculum implemented by the practitioners, such as teachers and principals, as a policymaker in schools on a small scale. Mappiasse and Sihes (2014) contended that evaluation would provide accountability to outside stakeholders. In other words, through PE, many advantages are gained by seeing the process and product of the language program conducted to reflect the absence of curriculum implementation and what substances should be maintained. Moreover, conducting PE can also develop the language curriculum a particular institution uses on a large scale.

Method

Design

This study followed a case-study design (Yin, 2018), with an in-depth analysis of language program evaluation as the phenomenon of teaching and learning English as a local content subject in elementary schools in Indonesia nowadays. A case study is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system (e.g., activity, event, process, or individuals) based on extensive data collection (Creswell, 2007). In terms of the case study, it is suitable for answering the research questions because the phenomenon of EYL in this study is that there is no PE conducted for the teachers of EYL regarding curriculum, lesson planning, selecting methods, instructional media, and assessment. In this study, English teachers were explored based on their opinion on the English language skills needed by YLs in their schools, what challenges of curriculum development, and what expected curriculum is appropriately used for YLs. Besides that, the nature of this study is also fitted with the characteristic of the case study phenomenon regarding a theory proposed using a summative evaluation concept (Nation & Macalister, 2010; Richards, 2001).

Participants

Three English teachers from two selected Islamic schools in Tasikmalaya, West Java, Indonesia, participated in this study. Before involving as participants, they were required to fill out the consent forms for the needs of research ethics. The participants were pseudonyms (Teachers A, B, and C) to keep their

confidentiality. The participants' profiles show their descriptions as participant considerations (Table 1).

Table 1

The profile of the participants

Participants	Gender/ age	Teaching experience	English language proficiency	Teacher category	School name	School Accreditation	Educational Background
Teacher A	Female/ 23 years	9 months	Intermediate	Novice teacher	SDIT AII	A	B.A. degree in English education
Teacher B	Male/ 26 years	2 years	Upper intermediate	Novice teacher	SDIT AII	A	B.A. degree in elementary teacher education
Teacher C	Female/ 40 years	17 years	N/A	Expert teacher	SDI AM	A	B.A. degree in English education

As shown in Table 1, Teacher A has been teaching for nine months since graduating from the English Education Program. Her English proficiency is proven by 500 scores on the Test of English Language Proficiency (an exit test before graduating with a bachelor's degree). Teacher B has been experiencing teaching English for two years and graduated, majoring in Elementary School Teacher Education. He can teach English because of his interest in teaching English and having good English proficiency (6.0 score on IELTS). Teacher C graduated from the English Education Program and has been teaching English in elementary school for 17 years. She is active in the teaching community and usually joins workshops related to teaching and learning in primary education. The participants are chosen because they all have experience teaching English in elementary school.

Regarding the school's profiles, the first school is the Integrated Islamic Elementary School or *Sekolah Dasar Islam Terpadu* ATII (SDIT ATII), and the second is the Islamic Elementary School or *Sekolah Dasar Islam* AM (SDI AM). The schools selected are accredited "A" (excellent accreditation), and they implement the English language program for grades one to six for 70 minutes per week.

Data collection

We collected the data using semi-structured interviews (Dawson, 2007). The interviews aimed to get in-depth information about the flexibility and valid response from the participant's perception of reality. It also intended to answer the research questions addressing the EYL teachers' perceptions of the skills of English needed, challenges in designing and developing the EYL curriculum, and an expected EYL curriculum based on the PE framework. The interview questions were constructed by the framework of the summative evaluation – one of the models of PE (Richards, 2001). The procedures of interviews were conducted six times with all participants through the online interview using the feature of Voice Note on the WhatsApp platform. Every participant was asked about their perception of PE used to facilitate them in developing the curriculum of EYL. Besides that, the participants should respond to more than 24 questions addressed to the participants consisting of the worth or the value of different aspects of the EYL curriculum regarding how to prepare lesson plans, select the materials and methods of teaching, decide on assessments, and the program's effectiveness.

Data analysis

We analyzed data obtained from the interviews using thematic analysis. It concerned identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The phases of thematic analysis consist of six steps, as described in Table 2.

Table 2
Thematic analysis procedures

No.	Phase	Description of the process
1.	Familiarizing yourself with your data	The process of reading and rereading the data to get initial codes.
2.	Generating initial codes	The data were coded.
3.	Searching for themes	The code is organized into potential themes.
4.	Reviewing themes	Themes are reviewed (creating a thematic map).
5.	Defining and naming themes	Refining and naming the specific themes.
6.	Producing the report	Writing a research report.

The thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) procedures followed the steps: first, we transcribed the interview data, dealing with the excerpts of participants concerning the challenges, perceptions, and expectations of PE in

developing the curriculum. After that, we coded the data systematically based on the interesting features across the data set, ordering data relevant to each code. The codes were then arranged into potential themes for addressing research issues, and all pertinent information were gathered for each potential theme related to the teachers' perceptions on the PE of English language learning for EYL curriculum development, teachers' challenges in designing and developing curriculum components, and expected EYL curriculum to implement in Indonesian elementary schools. Then we made a thematic map of the analysis, first determining whether the topics relate to the code extracts and the complete data set. Next, we clarified each theme's details, conveyed the research's overall narrative, and generated precise definitions and labels for each subject. Finally, we wrote a formal report summarizing the study and responding to the assigned research topics on teachers' voices in PE.

Trustworthiness

Due to the case study design as one of the qualitative methods of this study, to see the data valid, we used data triangulation (Patton, 2015) through member checking and seeing the documents of the syllabus and textbooks used. Every participant was asked to see their responses to the questions proposed in the interviews. Then the participants were convinced that their responses were appropriate to the research needs. The lesson plan was one of the ways as an artifact to check for participants' understanding and knowledge dealing with the questions proposed about the curriculum development. Then, the textbooks are a base for us to adjust the participants' responses in developing the materials.

Findings

After analyzing the data from interviews, the results stipulate that teachers' perceptions of the PE program highlight the important points, such as what language skills should be integrated into the EYL curriculum, the challenges regarding designing and developing a lesson plan, material development, teaching methods, and assessment practices. The followings are the evidence for each theme found.

The teachers' perceptions on the PE of English language learning for EYL curriculum development

The English language skills to develop the EYL curriculum

In examining the language skills in the English language program related to the student's language learning needs, the following data support the finding as the answer to the research questions (RQs). Teachers believe that language skills should include listening, speaking, reading, and writing in the content of language learning. The four language skills are necessary to develop an effective EYL curriculum. They support holistic language development, enable effective communication, promote academic success, open future career opportunities, and promote cultural understanding. Besides that, the participants also say that other language components, such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, can encourage the student's knowledge and performance in learning English.

Based on the interview results, all participants must identify what learners need to deal with language learning content regarding the skills needed by YLs. The contents should be considered based on the learning objectives to make them align with the goals determined. The followings are the data indicating language skills and elements needed by YLs.

> In my opinion, the first skills that should be learned at the beginning of language learning are speaking and listening, especially for the lower level (Grades 1 – 3). Besides that, they should learn vocabulary and grammar, which are very basic and simple, before knowing English as a foreign language. (Interview data of Teacher A)

> The language skills that should be existed in the materials or contents are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These are also encouraged by the vocabulary and pronunciation aspects in every learning unit. (Interview data of Teacher B)

> All aspects of language needed by elementary school students are listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and vocabulary must be included in designing materials. (Interview data of Teacher C)

The excerpts above indicate that young English learners should learn integrated language skills. Receptive and productive skills are required to form their skills in using language. The skills are also supported by the language elements such as grammar and vocabulary.

Teachers' challenges in designing and developing curriculum components

The second research question examines the teachers' challenges in designing and developing the curriculum components about syllabus design/lesson planning, selecting materials, conducting the methods, and doing EYL assessments practice. The teachers' challenges occurred regarding the four sub-themes as in the following descriptions.

Preparing the lesson

Preparing a lesson plan is useful for teachers and convenient for them to prepare their practice in the classroom during instructional practices. It also guides them to reflect on PE in teaching. In this study, the participants feel that the lesson planning process has a challenge due to their skill in developing it.

As shown in the following excerpts, the participants contended that the difficulties relate to their pedagogical competencies in planning the lesson.

> My ability to understand the practice of lesson plans. (Interview data of Teacher A)

> There are limited time and resources needed to support the lesson plan. (Interview data of Teacher B)

> The lesson plan should be prepared and aligned with the student's condition (characteristics). (Interview data of Teacher C)

Based on the excerpts above, it can be summarized that participants have three issues regarding the pedagogical competency referring to knowledge of designing lesson plans, time management to plan the lesson and learner characteristics consideration. It can be construed that designing a lesson plan requires time, effort, and knowledge. Creating a lesson plan is thinking about the starting point of teaching and the assessment as the product of the end of teaching.

Designing and developing the materials as learning content

Materials are an essential element in the curriculum element to correspond with the learning goals because they can lead to the success of the teaching-learning process. The 2103 curriculum does not provide primary or elementary school English subjects based on the Indonesian context. In this case, English teachers will have a massive chance to develop their curriculum involving instructional materials that can be planned and advanced.

In practice, teachers face crucial problems as a challenge to improve their competence. This condition can be seen in the following data.

> The challenge is the way or approach to delivering the materials, the sequence of materials delivery, and in what scope of materials should be delivered. (Interview data of Teacher A)

> It needs much time to integrate the instructional media and materials of learning. (Interview data of Teacher B)

> In selecting the appropriate kinds of instructional media and materials with learners' age and ability. (Interview data of Teacher C)

Based on the interview excerpts, participants dealt with instructional practices close to using instructional media and materials. They argued that most must be considered before applying in the classroom. They agreed to prepare them carefully. Due to these responses, it is interesting to note that teachers in this study have challenges dealing with preparing the contents of learning when it should be aligned with the learner's characteristics and condition of instructions.

Appropriate methods for young learners (YLs) instructions

As considered in the previous findings, curriculum elements will be incorporated with real teaching practice in the classroom. Teachers should understand how they choose the methods for the YLs' context. Most participants believe that classroom management, students' characteristics, motivation, and their funds of knowledge influence the process of implementing the method chosen.

> The challenge that I face is classroom management. Sometimes, I plan very well, but in practice, it can change based on obstacles, such as controlling students. So, the method cannot be applied as well as the plan determined. (Interview data of Teacher A)

> Sometimes, the method used is inappropriate for the student's condition, such as their up and down emotions, so it is ineffective in using a particular method. (Interview data of Teacher B)

> Sometimes, it is not fit for the students' different abilities/performances, motivations, and moods in learning. (Interview data of Teacher C)

The above excerpts indicate that participants perceived a praxis in implementing instructions. They exposed that it should refer to the practical application of theoretical knowledge in a classroom setting relating to their knowledge, skills, and teaching strategies in the actual classroom environment. Nevertheless, they found a problem with the student characteristics and classroom management instructions. Overall, praxis in teaching is about putting theory into practice and being able to reflect and adjust teaching practices based on the needs of the students.

Due to teach English in primary schools, teachers should create enjoyable and exciting activities. YLs can learn through play unconsciously, which can stick in their long-term memory. Playing games and singing along to songs while learning requires physical exercise. This can be a good strategy for TEYL related to their hands-on experience and avoiding their boredom which can affect their motivation in learning.

Deciding the instruments of assessment

In this finding, the participants have an intricate issue related to the challenges in the EYL assessment. In assessing YLs, the characteristics of young language learners who are unique and complex should be remembered and considered. This happens since their age, maturity, experience, and cognitive, linguistic, and literacy development are still developed. The following data show how teachers express their opinions toward the challenges in the EYL context.

> Because I teach in the lower grade, I sometimes feel confused with the type of instrument, especially to choose the test instrument that is appropriate and clear to students. Besides, even if I insert pictures into the test instrument, I find some pictures that do not match what is intended. (Interview data of Teacher A)

> The test instrument should be appropriate for the basic competence and test type used. The difficulty is finding an authentic instrument for assessing student activity. (Interview data of Teacher B)

> The assessment test should be aligned with the basic competencies, and types of tests will be used. (Interview data of Teacher C)

In accordance with participants' responses, they supposed that alignment in assessment practice is crucial to note. They should be careful in designing the assessment. They agreed to the principles of assessment related to the practical, validity, and reliability of instruments. This also highlights that practicing

assessment needs the effort to align with the goals of learning and the YLs' characteristics.

In response to the findings, many issues assess the young language learner complex. Among these are the age of the learners, YLs' development, the language focus of the EYL classroom, types of authentic and meaningful tasks, and the goals of the TEYL program.

Expected EYL curriculum to implement in Indonesian elementary schools

Based on the teachers' responses during the interview dealing with the third research question, the expected curriculum can be concluded based on the teachers' lenses. Here is the different expected EYL curriculum by each teacher.

Contextualized curriculum

Teacher A has her opinion regarding the curriculum that should be developed for the young learner's needs in Indonesian elementary schools. This statement can be seen from the following data from the interview.

> I think that the EYL curriculum should align with the real-life context where students expose the hands-on experiences regarding the materials. They can be integrated into the students' activities; they act them out in daily life. (Interview data of Teacher A)

The excerpt indicates that Teacher A perceived that the ideal curriculum for EYL should elaborate contextually and meaningfully for them. The contextualized curriculum aids language acquisition in early learners by teaching language skills in authentic settings where students need to utilize them. The teacher can create this curriculum through enjoyable content and tasks for students. The contextualizing curriculum is effective both for community-based and workplace classes.

Character-based curriculum

A character-based curriculum focuses on developing students' character traits, values, ethical behavior, and academic skills. A character-based curriculum aims to produce well-rounded students possessing the skills and knowledge necessary for academic success and positive personal and social development. The following data indicate that a participant responded to the interview question about whether the expected curriculum for TEYL should integrate a character-based aspect.

> The elementary school curriculum should cover or include character values easily integrated and implemented by teachers and students at school. Besides, the curriculum should involve content knowledge that can be measured and easy to practice daily. (Interview data of Teacher B)

Teacher B has his own opinion about the expected curriculum for EYL. He suggested putting the values inside the curriculum, which aligns with the core of Curriculum 2013 in Indonesia. He believes that YLs will get direct impacts of integrating more values in schools. Their attitudes will be maintained through the character-based curriculum.

School-based curriculum

Instead of being mandated by a centralized authority, such as an educational board, individual schools establish and execute a school-based curriculum. A curriculum centered on a school gives teachers and administrators more freedom to create and modify it to suit their students' unique requirements and interests. The following data indicate that the teacher agrees with the school-based curriculum.

> In my opinion, I agree with to use of the KTSP (School-Based Curriculum), which tends to see the ability of students and the school condition; thus, their abilities can be measured and evaluated well based on each school's and students' characteristics. Besides that, there will be education equality in remote areas regarding the difficulty of accessing the internet. This is also important when the English language should be a platform for supporting elementary school students in the future. (Interview data of Teacher C)

Teacher C has a different response. She believes that the model curriculum for EYL is a School-Based Curriculum in Indonesia. It was designed to have autonomy for schools in developing the curriculum based on the level of school and learner characteristics. As a result, the teacher may develop his methods and techniques in the teaching and learning process and improve the students' competencies. The KTSP (2006) contains a number of elements, including the goals of the educational institution, the format and content of KTSP, and the timetable that serves as a model for how schools should carry out the teaching and learning process.

In conclusion, three English teachers have different points of view in expecting kinds of curriculum in the future for elementary schools. This means designing and developing a curriculum needs analysis based on the school conditions, student characteristics, and teacher competencies. Thus, it should be developed by integrating character education, which is appropriate to the

school's characteristics, without ignoring the contextual knowledge and skills as the primary content for the EYL curriculum.

Discussion

Program evaluation (PE) of English language learning positively impacts curriculum development based on teachers' voices found in this study. This study should elaborate on several aspects of the theories or concepts to ensure the findings. Due to the language skills of young learners (YLs') needs, a learner should have the assistance of adults or parents. Linse (2005) perceived that a child could learn a native language when family members scaffold him to gain the linguistic input he receives. When a child learns his native language, family members can scaffold him to have the linguistic input he receives. This situation will be the same as YLs who learn English in a foreign language context. Pinter (2006) states that English should start with an emphasis on listening and speaking. After they have experience in listening and speaking, they will be introduced to the next skills – reading and writing. These skills are important since reading and writing can assist them in reinforcing what they are learning orally (Pinter, 2006). Then, to support those skills, they should be equipped with the basic knowledge of learning a vocabulary language. Brewster et al. (2002) believed that vocabulary could support the learners' literacy in language learning. It can be the basis of language learning, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Language aspects also play a significant role in YLs successfully learning a language and being included in the EYL curriculum.

Other issues regarding teachers' challenges are preparing the lesson, selecting the materials, teaching methods, and determining the assessments. These are involved in the teacher's pedagogical competence knowledge, which indicates a circular set of steps repeatedly showing the planning, implementation, evaluation, and revision (Haynes, 2010). The teaching practice always intertwines with the curriculum elements involving the goals, contents, methods, and assessment. According to Basil (2021), teacher lesson planning improves the efficiency of instruction and learning. A good lesson plan will bring a teacher to successful teaching by covering the aspects of the curriculum, which starts from formulating the precise objectives, deciding the materials and appropriate methods in delivering the lesson, and evaluating the process and the result of instruction.

In dealing with material development, Tomlinson (1998) contended that teachers should integrate attributes into the materials to enable language learning. Based on the same principle, educators must create instructional

resources that can provide students with fulfilling educational experiences, considering both the region's cultural norms and the student's educational needs (Lengkanawati, 2015). According to Qamariyah (2015), teachers should develop the materials regarding the appropriateness of curriculum, learners' characteristics, and the requirements to answer the challenging teaching-learning process. The study participants also shared their challenges related to time constraints and limited resources in developing the materials (Tarayyo & Anudin, 2021). The sake of considering the materials development is to prepare YLs to benefit fully from the more formal language teaching and to learn what they will get at secondary school.

Through PE, one of the important parts of the TEYL process is choosing and implementing the methods of instruction. Before determining the appropriate methods, teachers should consider YLs' characteristics. Due to these characteristics, Shin and Crandall (2014) thought that it is essential to reflect on the characteristics of YLs to provide adequate English instruction at the primary level, connect their energy, spontaneity, imagination, curiosity, and social tendencies to make the dynamic classroom place to learn English. YLs can acquire language through play and other fun activities. Thus, involving them in various physical activities may be much more successful (Sulistyo et al., 2019). What participants shared in this study about the difficulty of handling student emotions during learning, Pinter (2019) proposed that YLs should be provided with meaningful and purposeful activities to engage them in learning a language.

Conforming to the issue of assessments as shared by the participants, it specifies that they understood that determining assessments should consider learners' characteristics and the alignment between assessment and curriculum. According to Shin and Crandall (2014), while constructing assessments, it is important to carefully select assessment tasks that students may complete independently or in groups based on their qualities. Cheng and Fox (2017) argued that it could be achieved when selecting suitable assessment methods reflecting or signifying clear and appropriate learning goals. In conclusion, it is important to carefully consider the goals and advantages of language assessment for YLs for all parties concerned, particularly for assessment practice improvement. Therefore, this practice should be part of the regular planning, teaching, and assessing cycle.

To make the teaching and learning of EYL effective, the core of its process depends on the curriculum. One of the curriculum components is justifying the teaching methods to encourage student engagement. As Jilin (2017) stated, student engagement in learning activities arises through the joyful setting of the

contextualized curriculum. The distinctiveness features of the curriculum lead the teachers to provide conditions for the finest children's experiences in learning. Not only contextualized curriculum but also character-based curriculum should be incorporated into the EYL curriculum. According to Jazadi (2015), character education is an intentional effort to support individuals in comprehending, caring about, and acting according to core ethical principles. Meanwhile, Jazadi (2015) added that character education shapes individual learners of thinking and behavior to survive, have teamwork, and create decisions that can be accounted for. Another type of curriculum expected in this study is the school-based curriculum (KTSP). In KTSP, every school conducts it differently, varying from school to school. This occurs because of the unique qualities and circumstances distinguishing each institution. A school-based curriculum can be created as a system to reform a new curriculum, and instructors must transform and adapt school syllabuses to meet their local requirements (Hairon et al., 2018). KTSP was not enacted in Indonesia since the 2013 curriculum was officially decreed. Due to the new curriculum *Kurikulum Merdeka* (KM), we believe that there will have a chance and expectation for Indonesian YLs to learn English from the 1st grade with its learning outcomes in each learning phase. The rule of KM determines that the Indonesian elementary school can carry out the English subject as support for YLs to learn English at an early age.

This study supports the EYL curriculum development to have a new insight for the policymaker. It implies that the goal of PE in the construction of curricula is to ensure that the curriculum is efficient, consistent with learning objectives, sustainable, and culturally appropriate, and encourages continuous improvement through evidence-based decision-making and stakeholder involvement.

Conclusion

The present study investigated Indonesian teachers' voices on PE and focused on the challenges, perceptions, and expectations of English to Young Learner curriculum development. The results show that EYL teachers believe PE is vital to conduct since it can encourage curriculum development. They deal with challenges in designing and developing the curriculum related to lesson planning, materials development, instructional methods, and assessment practices. This study implies that PE is critical to conduct because it can highlight and contribute more to better education planning, especially in EYL

curriculum development in Indonesia. It may reflect on the learning language program, what should be developed, and what should be added to the program. Overall, PE may significantly influence the creation of the curriculum by offering insightful feedback and recommendations that can guide decision-making and guarantee that the curriculum is successful in reaching intended learning objectives. Furthermore, this study has only highlighted the summative evaluation model in PE. Further research can expose more on the effectiveness of PE, such as getting the data for counseling and mentoring, then can be presented and discussed with the individuals involved in PE to have more contribution to EYL curriculum reforms. This study has raised a few issues that require more research and supports another recommendation to do both small- and large-scale program evaluations of English in Indonesian elementary schools.

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