

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Materials have profoundly played important role in English Language Teaching. Materials are seen as an essential component of instructional design and are often viewed as a way of influencing the quality of classroom interaction and language use (Richards and Rodgers, 1986). In similar veins, Richards (2002; 251) sees the instructional materials as “a key component to most language programs” providing that instructional materials give the basis for much of the language input learners receive and the language practice that occurs in the classroom. Richards (1998; 128) even believes that the improvement in the quality of teaching will come about through the use of instructional materials.

Some teachers use instructional materials as their primary teaching resources. The materials provide the basis for the content of lessons, the balance of skills taught, and kinds of language practice students take part in. In other situations, materials serve primarily to supplement the teacher’s instruction. For learners, materials may provide the major source of contact they have with the language apart from the teacher. Hence the role and uses of materials in a language program are a significant aspect of language curriculum development (Richards, 2002; 252).

The effective use of instructional materials in language teaching are shaped by consideration of a number of factors, including teacher, learner, and contextual variables (Richards, 2005; McDonough and Shaw, 1993). Those factors, however, have often been neglected when teachers use the materials (Yan, 2007). This condition will result at the poor use of materials, and accordingly the objective of effective use of materials cannot be achieved.

In day to day's use of materials, teachers are characterized in three types of teachers as described by Grant (1987; 7) as follows

**Teacher 1:** 'I don't use a textbook. I prepare all my own teaching materials. After all, I know my students' needs better than any coursebook writer does.'

**Teacher 2:** 'I couldn't teach without a textbook. I use it just like a recipe. Follow it page by page, and you can't go wrong.'

**Teacher 3:** 'I find my coursebook very useful. I use it a lot of the time. But not all the time.'

From the description above, teacher 1 claims to be independent of any textbook (Grant, 1987; 7) while Prabhu (1987; 96) characterizes Teacher 2 to be 'tightly constructed' where textbooks are indispensable. Prabhu also characterizes teacher 3 as 'loosely constructed' where they stick closely to the textbook, but in practice they often depart from it. In short, these beliefs represented by those three teachers above need to be carefully recognized as teachers use the materials.

There are three forms of materials used – commercial materials, authentic materials, and teacher-made materials (Richards, 2002; 251). When these materials are brought to the classroom use, teachers need to organize them into a meaningful, interesting sequence of activities (Kitao and Kitao, 1997). In order to achieve this, therefore, Graves (2003) and Richards (2002) suggest that in using the materials, teachers need to follow the process of using materials from preparation to implementation.

The present study focuses on how teachers use the materials and how the students respond to their teachers' use of the materials. These issues are important among teachers as Harmer (2002) reminds them to watch their use of materials to be appropriately used. Otherwise, it will lead to ineffective materials to learn in which the materials do not meet students' needs and interests (Gebhard, 2000; 253). Therefore, the study also seeks for the students' needs and interests of the materials to improve the learners' motivation and thereby make learning better and faster (Hutchinson and Waters, 1995; 8).

To support the focus of present study, similar studies have been conducted. Tung and Ng (1992) cited in Richards (1998; 127) reported that teachers in their practice use different types of material resources, and these practices varies considerably in which experienced teachers use textbooks more often than do their novice colleagues (Moulton, 1994) who have adapted the materials to varying degrees (Yan, 2007). Particularly in Indonesian setting, Huda (1999; 136) reported the repetition of the materials and the dearth of “local content” in the teaching. Another study revealed that the Indonesian English teachers also tend to favor English-speaking published materials than locally-published materials (Zacharias, 2003). From the above studies, Moulton (1994) suggests that we must know why teachers behave as they do, in terms of their own thinking about instruction. This study tries to describe teachers’ behavior on how they use the materials and what pedagogical reasons underlie the decisions.

Considering the facts above, it is worth investigating the use of the materials by the teachers and how the students respond to it. The study is conducted in an enrichment English program in STIA LAN Bandung involving eight English teachers. The study reports how the teachers use the materials and how the students respond to the teachers’ material use. This study can hopefully yield important implications for the practice and research in ELT, and accordingly the information of the study can lead to the improvement of English language teaching and learning in Indonesia.

## **1.2 Research Question**

Based on the background mentioned above, research questions are formulated as follows:

1. How do the teachers use materials?
2. How do the students respond to the teachers’ use of materials?

### 1.3 Research Goals

Research goals of the present study are *first* to find out the use of instructional materials by the teachers which are essential to document effective ways of using materials and a record of different sources of materials Richards (2002; 270). Second, the study also seeks for students' responses sought to give the information about learning materials and teachers' competency in material use. Both research goals are expected to provide a deep and wide-ranging knowledge of the materials that the teachers can use (Bolitho, 1988;72), and accordingly make informed teaching decisions for teachers (Gebhard, 2000;15) on how to use the materials.

### 1.4 Significance of the Study

This study suggests how teachers use the instructional materials in a language classroom and how the students respond to the teachers' use of materials. The findings of the study are expected to be beneficial to the improvement of English language teaching and learning activities. For the teachers, the study can give information about the use of instructional materials; while for students, the study can reveal what kind of learning materials are preferable by the students and thus, provide information on teachers' competency in material use.

### 1.5 Definitions of the Terms

To the extent of the study, some terms are clarified as follows:

- **Instructional materials** are “any systematic description of techniques and exercises to be used in the classroom teaching” (Brown, 1995).
- **Coursebook (textbook)** is “prepackaged, published books used by the students and teacher as primary basis for a language course” (Graves, 2003; 226).

- **Supplementary materials** are books or other non-print materials used within the context of the instructional program which are not included in the definitions of textbooks or instructional materials listed above.
- **The use of materials** is the way how teachers prepare for the materials and how the materials are used in practice.

### 1.6 Organization of the Study

This study is organized in five chapters. Here is the list of the organization.

- **Chapter 1** deals with the background, research question, research goals, significance of the study, clarification of terms used throughout the study, and organization of the study.
- **Chapter 2** reviews the relevant literature on instructional materials specifying the discussion on the concept of the materials. The second discussion centers on the use of materials from the material preparation and material implementation, and the relevant research to the study.
- **Chapter 3** describes the methodology that was used to conduct this research. It presents the subject of the study, research design and procedure of data collection.
- In **Chapter 4**, the findings are presented to show how the teachers use the materials and how students respond to it. Then, these findings are discussed to see the implications of the study to the teachers' material use.
- In **Chapter 5**, some limitations of the study are discussed, the conclusions of this study are provided, and suggestions for further research are proposed.