LANGUAGE LABORATORY MANAGEMENT: AN OBSERVATORY REVIEW

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Abstract
Language laboratory facilitates the lecturers and the students in the process of learning a foreign language. However most of the language laboratories in Banjarmasin were not managed well. It can be seen that most of the laboratories were not managed well. This condition made the students not motivated to visit them. This study investigated the aspects of management and maintenance of the language laboratory in UIN Antasari Banjarmasin. It analyzed the organization of the English language laboratory, how it was managed by the laboratorians, and how it was maintaned. The method of the study was descriptive qualitative. The result of the study revealed that the management of the language laboratory was managed well but it needed some improvement in some facilities.

Keywords: Language laboratory, management, facility

1. INTRODUCTION

Language laboratory with a complete language laboratory tools and language laboratory software, with the existence of a digital computer system will make the process of learning a foreign language easier than using conventional tools. Language laboratory provides multimedia devices such as tape recorder, VCD / DVD Player, monitors or a language learning machine repeater. In addition, there are also multimedia as additional components that can be combined with all of them. Adamu and Umar (2018, p. 29) stated that the Language laboratory (LL) is an electronic device that is designed to help the learning process to become easier. In the laboratory, the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing have to be practiced.

In the language laboratory, there are some equipments and systems. The presence of teaching and learning facilities and infrastructure are among the factors supporting the smooth teaching and learning activities in the Language Laboratory. The equipments for the language laboratory are computer, headset or earphone, media player or recorder, LAN (local area network), and server computer. In the system, the teacher must have well established computer system with appropriate language software for conducting language exercises.The teacher and the students wear headsets to avoid noise and disturbances.The students have a media player/recorder for listening to audio and recording speech, teacher and student positions are connected via LAN (local area

network), and in some cases also via separate audio cabling. A server computer or a separate storage device is often used to store lesson materials in a digital format.

The research conducted by Hafiz (2013, p. 11), in Bangladesh found that a good number of universities had not yet established a language lab. But in the universities where well-equipped labs were available, English teachers were sincere in making use of them for the betterment of the students. However, in a few universities, labs were not well-maintained due to a lack of funds according to the teachers. Few teachers actually had formal training for operating labs properly hence they did not show much confidence in using them. Formal training for operating labs properly is greatly needed so that teachers will get confidence in using them.

Similar problems were found by Hashmi (2013, p. 8) in Pakistan. She stated some of the problems in the operation of digital language labs in technical/engineering universities included: (1) in a technical or engineering university/department, educators, management and students do not give the same rating to English language as to technical subjects. These institutions focus on their core subjects as they are more concerned about their students" technical knowledge rather than their language abilities. Therefore priority is given to the core subjects; (2) often no lab is available for the enhancement of English listening, speaking, reading and writing [LSRW] skills; (3) even when there is a lab, most of the English language teachers are afraid to use the technology and panic quickly when one of the buttons is not working as per their intent. They are more comfortable with traditional ways of teaching as they find them more convenient.

Based on the result of observation in preliminary study, it was found that many language laboratories in Banjarmasin were not managed well. It can be seen that they were not equipped with the language laboratory organization, the language laboratory management, and the langauge laboratory maintenance. This condition made the use of language laboratory in developing the students English skills, especially listening, skill was not effective. In short, the language laboratories did not have the standardized equipment and systems.

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that standard of the language laboratories in most schools and universities in Banjarmasin are still far from being ideal. Therefore, I am interested to describe the current condition of language laboratory management in UIN Antasari Banjarmasin. The result of study is important to know the condition of the laboratory so that the university can repair or manage the existing equipments.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
Language Laboratory

A language laboratory is an audio or audio-visual media used as a tool to develop second or foreign language skills. Most good secondary schools, universities and libraries are well equipped with language labs today. Alexander (2007, p. 2) explains that language labs established themselves as centers of language learning contemporaneously during the 1950s and 1960s; technological breakthroughs during this period were catalyzed by the

enticing rewards of musical entertainment and language labs were on the whole fortuitous beneficiaries of these market-orientated advancements.

Language laboratory has several types; manual, digital and multimedia. Digital language laboratory and multimedia language laboratory are also known by modern language laboratory. Modern language laboratory in general offer the text, images, audio and video can easily be integrated; teachers can alter materials to fit their requirements, Learners can record their own voice and play back the recordings, interact with each other and the teacher, and store results. Teachers can intervene and control the learners' computers via the teacher's console, track of learners' work, etc. Self-access for independent learning which includes access to resources outside class.

Language Laboratory Equipment

Language laboratory is a laboratory room with special laboratory equipment (in the form of computers, Student Panels, Audio devices, Teacher panels, Headsets, Speakers, etc.) created to facilitate the delivery of material. In the language laboratory (labor language) is usually equipped by tools that support these tools are divided into several parts. There are three parts that will be explained below:

a. Main Device

This main device determines the function of a unit that available in a language laboratory. Which the equipment can improve students' ability in language and depends on how the device is designed and developed.

- Control Panel : This panel controls the entire main panel or

the control panel can be a micro controller or computer system.

- Student panel : Student activity depends on the completeness of the system owned by the panel. This panel consists of several buttons and lights that flicker. Panel of students in the language laboratory type in the form of a more complete system.
- Headset   : This is a device for audio systems. Where this device will be a source of sound for various instructions. This tool will be used by language laboratory members and everyone gets the device directly in the laboratory.

b. Furniture

In this case the furniture is not the main thing, but the completeness of the furniture can be a complement to the language labor room and add to the impression of an attractive room. The level of comfort of the people in the room is also more or less derived from the completeness of this facility. These facilities are:

- Student Chair
- Student Desk and Instructor Desk
- Carpet

c. Multimedia Language Laboratory Equipment

Multimedia devices become the main thing that must be in the language laboratory room. The system of language laboratory is utilizing audio visual that means various lab equipment related to audio visual must be in the language laboratory room. The presence of this device is to provide convenience for the learning process of each language laboratory member. These are equipment that is usually in the language laboratory room:

- Chalkbo
- AC or ai

- LCD Television
- VCD
- Projector LCD
- Camera
- Tape Repeater
- Satellite dish, etc.

Language Laboratory Management

Managing language laboratory as a special place to support instructional activities for students should consider some important aspects. These aspects will become the regulation in which language laboratory management and its development run well as we expect. The purpose of knowing these aspects is to be aware that good language laboratory cannot be seen not only from its sophisticated technological tools but also the other important things on how the user of language laboratory follows the procedures to create comfortable and safe circumstances.

In relation to the language laboratory management, Marzuki (2014, p.1-11) conducts a research about how to manage language laboratory effectively. He states that at least there are four considerable aspects, namely laboratory facilities, standard operating procedures, the students themselves as users of language laboratory, and laboratory coordinators. Considering that these aspects are essential to be discussed further, the writer summarizes and reviews some fundamental aspects in managing language laboratory in details as follows:

a. Planning

Planning is the first aspect that should be regarded by the foreign language teacher. Managing language laboratory without planning will get nothing in terms of the way to develop its function. Moving from traditional classroom activities to language laboratory needs to be planned carefully.

Deeming and thinking of some possible factors, e.g. teachers and students activities while they are learning in language laboratory, appropriate material, time allocation, criteria of learning success, classroom control, classroom management are absolutely required.

b. Organizing

The second aspect in managing language laboratory is organizing. It refers to the attempt of running all language laboratory activities that have been planned in advance. There are two main activities in this stage. They are setting and regulating. Each of them is described briefly as follows:

1) Setting

This refers to the activities in which physical situation of language laboratory (e.g. seat position, furniture, lighting, wires position, teaching and learning stationaries, etc) are set carefully. These setting activities have to consider some important principles including safety, effectiveness, efficiency, and its comfort;

2) Regulating

This refers to the activities of making guideline and regulation in forms of formal rules that should be followed by teacher and students. These activities regulate and decide the organization structure of language laboratory, job description, regular schedule, formal rules, standard operation procedures of using language laboratory devices, and its safety rules.

c. Administrating

Administrating is the other important aspects in managing language laboratory. Administrating is the way to record the important data and related files as an attempt to keep and document language laboratory activities regularly and carefully. Administrating activity

must be applied in managing laboratory. Thus, some of data that need to be administrated carefully include the list of language laboratory devices and its specification, the language laboratory devices of manual user, the list of language laboratory user and their activities, the schedule of language laboratory maintenance, and the regular service of language laboratory devices.

d. Maintenance

Maintenance deals with the effort of protection. It indicates that we should maintain and protect language laboratory devices to be used effectively. No matter how sophisticated such language laboratory tools we have, maintenance is compulsory to be regarded by all the user. There are some language laboratorium tools that need to be maintained regularly, such as the language laboratory utilities and its accesories, the electricity, the fire detector, the wire position, the internet networking, the software program, the hardware, etc. Maintaining the language laboratory requires much time and cost. It enables us to repair and recheck possible damage situation that can occur anytime when we are utilizing language laboratory.

e. Safety

The other important aspect in managing language laboratory is safety. Using language laboratory devices is highly risk with some possible accident may occur incidentally or not. Perrow (2001) explains the cause of accident may happen in language laboratory. They are:

1) Lack of knowledge in following standar operation procedures of using language laboratory;

2) Unclear safety rules proposed by language laboratory manager. Giving clear explanation of safety rules

profesionally, patiently, and accurately to the students are absolutely needed;

3) Lack of supervision and control by language laboratory manager toward all activities have been carried out;

4) Less of awareness and responsibility from the students to maintain language laboratory.

It is unavoidable that most of students are curious learners. Naturally, they want to know anything. Some of them may feel happy to use electronic devices that they never use before. For instance, they press any kinds of both hardware and software buttons, they open unimportant website if it is provided by internet networking, or they open irrelevant application available. As a result, awareness and responsibility in maintaining language laboratory device is ignored by students due to their self-curiosity.

f. Funding

The last aspect that is important to support the use of language laboratories in language teaching is funding. The use of the language laboratory will be ineffective and inefficient for our activities without the support of sufficient funding. In relation to the funding aspect, language laboratory manager should regulate how much cost would be allocated for language laboratory equipment and its maintenances. Sufficient cost will support either the success of technology-based instruction using language laboratory or the success of scale priority to be covered urgently related to the maintenance aspect.

In relation to this funding aspect analysis, measurement, and priority scale analysis are needed to konow the cost that should be allocated for. Funding can be allocated for purchasing such

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technological tools in language laboratory based on students' needs. It also can be spent for repairing and maintaining these tools regularly based on particular conditions, such as:

1) Troubles and unstable electricity network;
2) Troubles on the furniture of language laboratory;
3) Serious troubles on the electronic devices that need electrician's help and service;
4) Unpredictable troubles of other components in language laboratory.

5) Special cost allocated for maintenance of internet networking (if any), hardware as well as software program provided.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study used descriptive qualitative since the data gathered were in the form of information related to the topic of the study. The data were collected by using observation and interview. Observation was held on December 4th 2019 by visiting UIN Antasari Banjarmasin. The observation was conducted by filling the observation form as follows:

Aspects	Description	Result (√)	Notes
Organizational chart	There is organizational chart hanging on the wall or document stating names and position on the language laboratory	-	There is no organizational chart hanging on the wall because the laboratory is still new, but the lecturer who use the laboratory said that there is the document about organizational chart and the document still on process because the change of the position on the head of the laboratory and the staff.
Management	There is lab rule printed or stated	-	The laboratory has rules but not in printed form, it is just on document form. Since the laboratory is still new, so there is no chart hanging on the wall.
	There is attendance sheet or book	√	Yes, the laboratory has attendance sheet or book.
	There is daily, weekly, monthly, or annual program book/file	√	Yes, the laboratory has daily and weekly program. The daily program is attendance sheet, and for the weekly program is the listening class. They don't have a monthly program unfortunately.
	There is document related to job description and responsibility of each individual	√	Yes, the laboratory has the document related to job description and responsibility of each individual.
	There is document or file showing the result of	√	Yes, the laboratory has the document file showing the result of language

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	language program		program.
Service and maintenance	There is manual book of language lab program	√	Yes, the laboratory has manual book of language lab program on document.
	There is document or files related to maintenance and service schedule	√	Yes, the laboratory has document or files related to maintenance and service schedule, but the lecturer said the faculty people who have it. Since the laboratory not especially only for English Education Department, but the laboratory also used for Arab Education Department.
	There is document or files showing the list of tools in the language lab with its condition	√	Yes, the laboratory has document or files showing the list of tools in the language lab with its condition. They have in printed form too, with the frame.

The data of the study are gathered by observation and interview. Observation was conducted at the langugae laboratory. The interview was done with Hidayah Nor, M.Pd. She was the listening lecturer who used the language laboratory at UIN Antasari Banjarmasin.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result of the reserach showed that the language laboratory of UIN Antasari Banjarmasin had problems related with the management, organization, service and maintenance. First, in terms of language laboratory organization, it was found that there was no organizational chart put on the wall because the lab was a new laboratory, but it had the document. In terms of management on the lab the chart were available in the form of document. Likewise, the service and the maintenance systems are also available in the form of document. Unfortunately, they did not have the organizational chart and rules in printed form because

the laboratory was still new. For the service and maintenance, the lecturers did not have the schedule, the schedule was held by the faculty people since the laboratory was not used only for the English Department but also for the Arabic Department. In relation to this condition, Marzuki (2014, p.1-11) states that at least there are four considerable aspects, namely laboratory facilities, standard operating procedures, the students themselves as users of language laboratory, and laboratory coordinators.

In reference to the description above, it can be stated that there were three aspects found related to the language laboratory of UIN Antasari Banjarmasin; they were organizational chart, management, and service and maintenance. The first aspect is organizational chart. Based the result of observation, there was no organizational chart hanging on the wall because the laboratory was still new, but there was the document about organizational chart.

Second, in terms of the management of the laboratory there were no rules chart put on the wall, The laboratory had rules but not in printed form, it was just on document form. However for the other management like attendance sheet, annual program, document of job description and document the result of the program they all had it. However at annual program the laboratory only had daily and weekly program, but there was no program for monthly program. In terms of language laboratory organization, Vivi Aulia (2016) categorized into two stages; setting and regulating. Setting refers to the activities in which physical situation of language laboratory (e.g. seat position, furniture, lighting, wires position, teaching and learning stationaries, etc) are set carefully. Meanwhile regulating refers to the activities of making guideline and regulation in forms of formal rules that should be followed by teacher and students.

The last, in terms of service and maintenance, the language laboratory had already had manual book in the document form, the list of the tools and the condition in document form and printed form with frame and the maintenance service schedule. However for maintenance and service schedule the lecturers who used the laboratory did not have the document, because the schedule was only available in the faculty department since the language laboratory was not only used for English Department but also it was also used for Arabic language Department. The result of this researh is similar with the result of the research conducted by Hafiz (2013), in Bangladesh which found that a good number of universities had not yet established a language lab.In a few universities, labs were not well-maintained due to a lack of funds.In short, the language

laboratory in UIN Banjarmasin need some improvements before using it for conducting the teaching and learning English.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGENSTIONS

Conclusion

In reference to the result above it can be concluded:

a. In terms of organizational chart, they had it but only in the document form, in printed form hanging on the wall they did not have it, since the laboratory was new.

b. In the management aspect, (1) the laboratory rule was only available in the document form, (2) the laboratory has attendance sheet and book. (3) The language laboratory daily and weekly program, (4) The language laboratory had job description, and (5) It had a book for program evaluation.

c. In terms of service and maintenance; (1) the laboratory had manual book in the document form. (2) The laboratory had a schedule for service and maintenance, and (3) the language laboratory had list of tools with its condition in document and printed form with frame.

Suggestions

Based on the conclusion above, two suggestions are proposed:

a. The language laboratory was in good condition since it was still a new laboratory. It is suggested that the laboratory is maintained well so that it will facilitate the lecturers and the students in learning language subjects.

b. It is suggested that the laboratory has organizational chart and rule in printed form in the laboratory room. Therefore, the students who used the

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laboratory know the conditions and the rules when they are in the laboratory.

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