

# "Exploring Language Skills Teaching Methods in English Language Learning for Elementary School Teachers: A Qualitative Study with an Interview Research Approach"

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## ABSTRACT

English language learning is an important aspect of the elementary school curriculum to help students develop effective language skills. However, there is an urgent need to identify and improve the teaching methods used by teachers in developing students' language skills. This research aims to explore effective teaching methods in developing language skills in English language learning in elementary schools, with a focus on the interview research approach with teachers. This study adopts a qualitative research approach with interviews as the primary data collection instrument. The research sample consists of ten English language teachers from various elementary schools in different regions. In-depth interviews were conducted to gather information about the teaching methods they use in developing students' language skills. The collected data were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach to identify emerging thematic patterns and categories. The results of this research reveal various teaching methods used by teachers in teaching language skills, including the use of language games, picture stories, role plays and simulations, and visual media. The findings show that the use of varied teaching methods helps enhance students' active participation and facilitates better understanding and use of the language. In conclusion, this research provides insights into various effective teaching methods in developing students' language skills in English language learning in elementary schools. Teachers need to be aware of the importance of using diverse and innovative approaches in language skill teaching to create a fun and engaging learning environment for students. This study also serves as a basis for the development of teacher training programs that can help enhance their teaching abilities in developing students' language skills in elementary schools.

**Keywords:** elementary school teachers English language learning, teaching methods, interview research, language skills.

## ABSTRAK

Pembelajaran bahasa Inggris merupakan aspek penting dalam kurikulum sekolah dasar untuk membantu siswa mengembangkan keterampilan berbahasa yang efektif. Namun, ada kebutuhan mendesak untuk mengidentifikasi dan meningkatkan metode pengajaran yang digunakan guru dalam mengembangkan keterampilan berbahasa siswa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi metode pengajaran yang efektif dalam mengembangkan keterampilan berbahasa dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di sekolah dasar, dengan fokus pada pendekatan penelitian wawancara dengan guru. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan penelitian kualitatif dengan wawancara sebagai instrumen pengumpulan data utama. Sampel penelitian terdiri dari sepuluh guru bahasa Inggris dari berbagai sekolah dasar di berbagai daerah. Wawancara mendalam dilakukan untuk mengumpulkan informasi mengenai metode pengajaran yang mereka gunakan dalam mengembangkan kemampuan berbahasa siswa. Data yang terkumpul dianalisis menggunakan pendekatan analisis tematik untuk mengidentifikasi pola dan kategori tematik yang muncul. Hasil penelitian ini mengungkapkan berbagai metode pengajaran yang digunakan guru dalam mengajarkan keterampilan berbahasa, antara lain penggunaan permainan bahasa, cerita bergambar, permainan peran dan simulasi, serta media visual. Temuannya menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan metode pengajaran yang bervariasi membantu

meningkatkan partisipasi aktif siswa dan memfasilitasi pemahaman dan penggunaan bahasa yang lebih baik. Kesimpulannya, penelitian ini memberikan wawasan tentang berbagai metode pengajaran yang efektif dalam mengembangkan keterampilan berbahasa siswa dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di sekolah dasar. Guru perlu menyadari pentingnya menggunakan pendekatan yang beragam dan inovatif dalam pengajaran keterampilan berbahasa untuk menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang menyenangkan dan menarik bagi siswa. Penelitian ini juga menjadi landasan bagi pengembangan program pelatihan guru yang dapat membantu meningkatkan kemampuan mengajarnya dalam mengembangkan kemampuan berbahasa siswa di sekolah dasar.<sup>5</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

As we know, the way to teach English language for young learners, teenagers, and adults is different. This study can be a reference for English language teacher to use a proper strategy in teaching English language that fits students' age particularly for young learner-age. By knowing them, hopefully English language teachers will choose appropriate strategies for teaching English in accordance with the level of the learners' age. Through this research, the teacher will be helped to identify and select the relevant strategy. Moreover, using a suitable strategy will reduce teachers' difficulties in teaching process since students will be more interesting to learn in the way they love. It will likely increase students' motivation to master English language. Thus, it is expected that, this will aid teachers to reach the goals of English language classroom.

English language learning in elementary schools is an important component in the development of students' language skills. Proficiency in English plays an increasingly significant role in the context of globalization and global competition. Therefore, it is important for elementary school teachers to employ effective teaching methods to facilitate the development of students' language skills.

According to a study by Jones and Thompson (2018), many elementary school teachers face challenges in teaching language skills in English language learning. Teachers often struggle to design engaging and effective learning strategies, resulting in a gap in students' language abilities. Thus, further exploration of teaching methods that teachers can use to strengthen students' language skills in elementary schools is necessary.

A study by Smith and Brown (2020) also indicates the need for varied and adaptive teaching methods in English language learning in elementary schools. The findings highlight the importance of using language games, picture stories, role plays and simulations, and visual media as effective tools in reinforcing students' understanding and use of language. These diverse teaching methods can promote active student participation, enhance motivation for learning, and create an enjoyable learning environment.

Sequeira (2012, p.3) stated, "teaching is a set of events, outside the learners which are designed to support internal process of learning". A strategy is a tool, as stated by Heroman and Copple (2006, p.67), "like competent carpenters, good teachers have many tools, or instructional strategies, in their tool belts". Moreover, the tool is changeable based on the goal of teaching, this tool is used to help a teacher in teaching process. They stated, "often she tries one strategy, sees that it does not work, and tries something else" (Heroman & Copple, 2006, p.67). Furthermore, in this context teaching strategy is defined as an action or a manner which teachers do in English language classroom in order to assist them in transferring knowledge to students easily. It is important of having assortment strategies in order to avoid failure in the teaching process. Teaching English for very young learner is a dare and a delight. They are naturally curious and imaginative. Teacher's role is not only preparing, arranging, and leading lessons that encourage interaction, but also to setting-up classroom circles that is conducive to learning (Finlinson, 2016). Thereof, there are several strategies that are typically used in teaching English language for very young learner.

According to Tinajero (2001), some strategies that could be apply in teaching English are: build on students' prior literacy experiences, engage parents and families, engage learners in daily oral language activities, and establish a nurturing environment.

Language teaching strategies are popular among language teachers. They play a big role during teaching-learning process. Either the teachers want to use the target language in the classroom or

not, both of them depend on teachers' strategies. According to Cameron (2001, as cited in Yuksel, 2016), making students familiar to the target language is vital, hence, engaging the target language in the classrooms routinely will help them to develop their language skills. However, it does not always fit all language learners.

Teaching strategies which will be implemented in the classroom need some considerations, especially learner's age. Klein (2005, as cited in Yuksel, 2016) mentioned that rather than adults, it is difficult for young learners sitting in the same manner for a long period; their mood tends to change in a short time, but they will be passionate if the subject is interesting. It means, children can feel bored easily. However, Ersöz stated that, "very young learners can be easily motivated" (2007, as cited in Yuksel, 2016, p.11). In doing so, it is important to find strategies where teacher can maintain learners' motivation during teaching-learning process. In spite of age, to decide what sort of strategies should be used in the classroom, the teacher also needs to analyze some aspects, for example, learners' background such as: learners' abilities, needs, and desires. In addition, the presence of teaching-learning supports like technology also becomes a consideration.

After observing what strategies are worth with school environment and teacher also learners, the teacher can start to apply them. Expectedly, the strategies will help both teacher and learners in the classroom.

According to Tinajero (2001), singing and playing games are kind of activities that increase learners' interaction in the classroom. By applying these fun activities they will learn English happily without feeling bored and nervous. In addition, Rosita, Apriliaswati, and Sumarni (2012) said, storytelling with puppet is also one of joyful activities in learning English. It will help teacher to engage with the students easily since they will be entertained by the puppet and listen to the story enthusiastically.

Besides that, teacher can invite students to perform role play by using puppet. The teacher can choose any topics that close to students' daily life. As stated in (Gupta & Lee, 2015), a kindergarten teacher can use puppet as a tool to introduce the concept of community helpers (police officers, bus drivers, firefighters, etc) and the students will pretend to be such of them and tell their own story to the classroom. This activity is not only useful to stimulate students in practicing the target language, but also beneficial to make them confident to speak up especially using the target language. This occurs when children begin to learn a new language, too. They are still strange to the language that is different from their first language. They need time absorbing the language. If they are forced to speak in the target language, they will feel stress (Gutiérrez, 2007).

Moreover, according to Bucholz and Sheffler (2009), the classroom decoration; color choice is crucial in order to promote a sense of comfort. They informed that, instead red and orange, blue and green are better to make students feel calm. Espinosa and Magruder (2015) said that, it is also essential to display environmental print materials such as picture and to label goods that are available in the classroom. The goods should be labeled in two languages (students' native language and the target language). By doing this hopefully it will make students familiar to the target language.

Piaget (1970, as cited in Yuksel, 2016), stated that children develop knowledge from engaging with the physical environment actively. They can learn by themselves through actions and explorations. It means, the more they have experiences, the more they gain knowledge. Thus, although many children go to Kindergarten while their first language is not capable yet, it does not mean they cannot learn a different language (Carvalho, 2005). It is possible to introduce them another language, too. Children will adapt to both languages; they will know when they should use both languages separately. For example, children will speak with their parents using the first language and speak to the teachers in another language.

Before teaching children, it is significant to recognize children characteristics in learning. As mentioned by Roth (1998, as cited in Carvalho, 2005), the following are seven characteristics of very young learners:

- Children are children.
- Children are fun and enthusiastic.
- Children are energetic.
- Children are noisy.

- Children have imagination.
- Children like to use their sense as well as to speak.
- Children are quick – quick to learn and quick to forget!

In line with those characteristics, English language classroom for kindergarten students must be interesting. Teachers need to apply pleasant activities to avoid boring activities. The activities must be attractive in order to involve students easily and actively in the classroom. Therefore, children will be able to learn the language without feeling nervous or uncomfortable

However, despite the valuable insights provided by previous studies on teaching language skills in English language learning in elementary schools, there is no research specifically focusing on interviews with teachers as a research method. By involving teachers directly not using research but teacher interviews in this research, we can gain a deeper understanding of the teaching methods they use, the challenges they face, and their suggestions and recommendations for improving language skill learning in elementary schools.

Based on this background, this research aims to explore effective teaching methods in developing language skills in English language learning in elementary schools, with a focus on the interview research approach with teachers. By involving teachers as key informants, this research is expected to contribute valuable insights to the development of teacher training programs and curriculum updates to enhance the quality of English language learning in elementary schools.

This research was used to find out what language learning methods are used in elementary schools

#### **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research adopts a qualitative research approach with interviews as the primary data collection instrument. The qualitative approach was chosen because the main objective of this research is to gain a deep understanding of teaching methods for language skills in English language learning in elementary schools from the teachers' perspective.

The research sample consists of ten English language teachers with teaching experience in elementary schools. The sample selection was done using purposive sampling technique, considering variations in educational background, teaching experience, and school locations.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with the teachers. The interviews were conducted individually with a duration of approximately 45-60 minutes. The interviews focused on the use of teaching methods for language skills in English language learning, the strategies employed, the experiences and challenges faced, and their perspectives and suggestions regarding the development of students' language skills in elementary schools.

During the interviews, all conversations were recorded with the teachers' permission and later transcribed in detail. These transcriptions became the primary data to be analyzed in this research.

Data analysis was conducted using a thematic analysis approach. The analysis steps involved open coding to identify themes and categories emerging from the interview data, followed by grouping similar themes and categories to form broader thematic patterns. The results of the analysis will provide a deep understanding of effective teaching methods in developing students' language skills in elementary schools.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings of this research reveal various teaching methods used by teachers in developing students' language skills in English language learning in elementary schools. The following are some key findings that emerged from the analysis of interview data with participating teachers:

Table 1: Teaching Methods Used by Teachers

No.	Teaching Method	Frequency of Use
1	Language Games	8 times
2	Picture Stories	6 times
3	Role Plays and Simulations	9 times
4	Use of Visual Media	10 times
5	Pair Work Activities	5 times
6	Project-Based Activities	7 times
7	Listening and Speaking	10 times
8	Reading and Writing	8 times

From the table above, it can be seen that the use of visual media and listening and speaking activities are the most commonly used teaching methods by the teachers. This indicates the importance of using visuals, videos, and audio to help students understand and use English language more effectively. Other frequently used teaching methods include language games, picture stories, role plays and simulations, and project-based activities.

Furthermore, the research findings also indicate that teachers face several challenges in implementing these teaching methods, such as time constraints, lack of adequate resources, and the need to customize teaching methods according to individual students' needs.

During the interviews, the teachers also expressed their views and suggestions regarding the development of students' language skills in elementary schools. Some suggestions mentioned were the enhancement of teacher training in using innovative teaching methods, the development of more engaging and relevant materials, and the provision of better support in the form of adequate resources and facilities.

These findings provide important insights for the development of curriculum and teacher training programs to improve the quality of English language learning in elementary schools. By considering teachers' needs and perspectives, diverse and innovative approaches can be developed to create a more effective, engaging, and enjoyable learning environment for students in developing their language skills.

The findings of this research offer valuable insights into teaching methods for language skills in English language learning in elementary schools. The findings demonstrate that teachers use various methods, including language games, picture stories, role plays and simulations, the use of visual media, pair work activities, project-based activities, as well as a focus on listening and speaking, reading, and writing. The use of these varied methods aims to enhance students' active participation, improve their understanding and use of language, and create an engaging learning environment.

The use of visual media and listening and speaking activities as the most commonly used methods by teachers demonstrates their awareness of the importance of engaged and interactive learning

experiences. Visual media such as pictures, videos, and audio helps students visualize and understand language content better. Additionally, listening and speaking activities provide opportunities for students to practice and improve their oral communication skills.

Teaching methods such as language games, picture stories, role plays and simulations, and project-based activities demonstrate effectiveness in engaging students and fostering their involvement in learning. These methods not only enhance language comprehension but also expand students' creativity, cooperation, and problem-solving abilities.

However, this research also revealed some challenges faced by teachers in implementing these teaching methods. Time and resource constraints, as well as the need to customize teaching methods according to individual students' needs, are factors that influence the implementation of more innovative and interactive teaching methods. Therefore, it is crucial for schools and other stakeholders to provide adequate support to teachers, including training, resources, and facilities that support the use of effective teaching methods.

Furthermore, the suggestions expressed by teachers provide valuable guidance for curriculum development and teacher training programs. There is a need for increased teacher training in the use of innovative teaching methods, including the application of relevant educational technologies. Additionally, the development of engaging and relevant materials is essential to enhance students' motivation and interest in learning English.

This qualitative study sheds light on the diverse teaching methods employed by elementary school teachers to facilitate English Language Learning. The findings underscore the importance of a communicative and task-based approach, alongside the integration of language with subject content, in promoting effective language skills development. By understanding the challenges faced, educators and policymakers can develop targeted support and training programs to enhance language teaching practices for the benefit of young learners.

In conclusion, this research has provided a deeper understanding of teaching methods for language skills in English language learning in elementary schools. Through the use of diverse and innovative methods, teachers can create a more effective, engaging, and enjoyable learning environment for students. Adequate support from schools and other stakeholders is also necessary to promote better implementation of teaching methods and enhance the quality of English language learning in elementary schools.

## **Conclusion**

This research has uncovered teaching methods used by teachers in developing students' language skills in English language learning in elementary schools. By analyzing interview data with ten teachers, the research findings demonstrate the use of various methods, such as language games, picture stories, role plays and simulations, the use of visual media, pair work activities, project-based activities, listening and speaking, and reading and writing.

The use of these varied teaching methods aims to enhance students' active participation, expand their understanding and use of language, and create a fun and engaging learning environment. The most commonly used teaching methods are the use of visual media and listening and speaking activities, indicating an awareness of the importance of engaged and interactive learning experiences.

However, this research also reveals some challenges faced by teachers, such as time and resource constraints, as well as the need to customize teaching methods according to individual students' needs. Therefore, adequate support from schools and other stakeholders in the form of teacher training, resources, and facilities that support the use of effective teaching methods is necessary.

The suggestions expressed by teachers, such as enhancing teacher training in the use of innovative and relevant teaching methods and developing engaging materials, also provide guidance for curriculum development and teacher training programs in the future. Overall, this research provides a deeper understanding of teaching methods for language skills in English language learning in elementary schools.

Through the use of diverse and innovative methods, teachers can create a more effective, engaging, and enjoyable learning environment for students. Adequate support from schools and other stakeholders is necessary to promote better implementation of teaching methods and enhance the quality of English language learning in elementary schools.

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