

Navigating the challenges of TEFL in resource-limited elementary school: insights from Yogyakarta

Jati Suryanto

English Language and Education Department, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta

Email:jatisuryanto@umy.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in elementary schools, particularly in resource-limited settings, presents significant challenges. In Yogyakarta, Indonesia, these challenges are intensified in a public school, where limited resources, such as teaching materials, technology, and professional development opportunities, hinder the ability of teachers to deliver effective language instruction. Despite these constraints, English remains a crucial part of the education system in Indonesia, with increasing recognition of its importance for academic, professional, and social advancement. This study aims to explore the specific challenges faced by teachers in a public elementary school in Yogyakarta, and the strategies they employ to overcome these challenges in teaching English to young learners. A qualitative research design was employed, with data collected through interviews with three experienced teachers from the early stages in the school. The study identifies key challenges, including students' difficulties with pronunciation, short attention spans, bilingualism, and the quick forgetting of lessons. It also highlights strategies that teachers use to address these issues, such as incorporating fun songs and videos, using games, and employing interactive methods to engage students. The findings underscore the importance of creative, low-cost strategies in overcoming resource limitations and fostering an engaging and effective learning environment. This research contributes valuable insights into TEFL practices in resource-constrained contexts and offers recommendations for improving English language teaching in similar settings worldwide.

Keywords: *Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), resource-limited settings, teaching challenges, teaching strategies, young learners, creative teaching methods.*

Article History: Received 15 Jan 2025, Final draft 7 Feb 2025, Published 7 Feb 2025

Introduction

Significant challenges appear in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in elementary schools, especially in resource-limited environments. (Cahyani, 2021) said that these challenges become more serious in developing regions, where the lack of teaching materials, technological resources, and professional development opportunities influence the ability of teachers to deliver effective language instruction. In Yogyakarta, Indonesia, although English language teaching is an essential educational goal, these obstacles are particularly severe. As globalization increases, as mentioned by (Yusuf, 2021), proficiency in English is seen as crucial for academic, professional, and social advancement, that makes TEFL in elementary

education critical, even in resource-constrained settings.

English is taught from an early age in Indonesia. Children in many schools begin their English education in elementary school. For young children, early language learning provides numerous cognitive, social, and cultural benefits. As stated by (Snow, 2010) and (L. Zhang, 2012), early bilingualism improves cognitive flexibility, problem-solving abilities, and cultural awareness. Language acquisition during elementary years forms the foundation for future learning and personal development, underscoring the importance of providing young learners with effective English language instruction.

*Corresponding Author: **Jati Suryanto**. Mailing address: English Education Dept., Faculty of Language Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Jl. Brawijaya, Kasihan, Bantul, Yogyakarta 55183, Indonesia email: jatisuryanto@umy.ac.id, DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.30595/lks.v19i1.25802>, ©2025 Leksika. All rights reserved.

In Yogyakarta, the teaching of English in public elementary schools is complicated by limited resources. With tight budgets, these schools often get problem with the quality of education. With minimal materials, inadequate access to technology, and limited classroom space, teachers face challenges delivering high-quality instruction. Even (A. Yusuf, 2021) said that the lack of audiovisual tools and online resources further complicates teaching. Moreover, many teachers that lack of formal TEFL training, make it difficult for them to implement effective practices. Teachers are often left to rely on creativity and resourcefulness, using low-cost methods like songs, games, and stories to engage students and maximize available resources (Henkel, 2020).

The objective of this study is to explore and comprehensively understand the challenges faced by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in public elementary schools in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, particularly in resource-limited settings. The primary goal of this research is to identify and analyse the key obstacles that hinder effective language instruction in these classrooms. These challenges are multifaceted and stem from a range of factors inherent in resource-constrained environments. For instance, EFL teachers often contend with limited access to educational resources such as textbooks, multimedia tools, and teaching technologies, which are essential for delivering high-quality lessons. The absence of such materials can severely limit the variety of teaching methods and the potential for interactive learning, which are critical for maintaining student engagement, particularly in young learners. Moreover, teachers face difficulties in keeping students engaged due to their short attention spans, which is a common issue when teaching young learners in elementary schools. Another significant challenge is the lack of exposure to native English speakers, a factor that is essential for developing speaking and listening skills. Additionally, teachers in these settings may not always have access to professional development opportunities or formal training in modern teaching methodologies, leaving them to rely on their personal initiative and experience to adapt their teaching practices.

The second objective of this study is to investigate the strategies employed by EFL teachers to overcome these challenges and enhance language acquisition in their classrooms. Given the constraints they face, teachers in Yogyakarta must rely on creative and resourceful teaching methods to make the most out of the limited resources available to them. This study will focus on the innovative and low-cost strategies that teachers use, such as incorporating songs, games, storytelling, and role-plays, which not only make learning more engaging for students but also provide meaningful opportunities for language practice. These methods are particularly important in fostering an interactive learning environment, which is essential for young learners who thrive on engagement and hands-on activities. By utilizing these creative strategies, teachers can effectively overcome the limitations imposed by the lack of advanced resources or technologies, ensuring that students remain motivated, engaged, and actively involved in the learning process. Moreover, the study will explore how these strategies help enhance language acquisition, boost student motivation, and create a positive learning atmosphere despite the constraints of the teaching environment.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to fill a critical gap in the literature surrounding Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in resource-limited settings, particularly in the context of elementary education. While there is an abundance of research focusing on secondary and higher education or more resource-rich settings, there is limited exploration of the challenges and strategies related to EFL teaching in public elementary schools, especially in developing countries like Indonesia. By focusing specifically on Yogyakarta, this study offers a fresh perspective on the unique difficulties faced by teachers in these environments, providing insights that are not widely explored in the existing body of research. Through this focus, the study contributes valuable knowledge to the field of TEFL, specifically in contexts where resources are limited but the need for effective language instruction remains high.

In addition to enriching the literature, this study also provides significant insights into

teacher innovation in resource-limited settings. Teachers in such environments are often required to be highly resourceful, creative, and flexible in order to ensure that learning outcomes are achieved despite the challenges they face. The study will document and analyse the strategies employed by teachers in Yogyakarta, offering a closer look at the methods they use to make learning accessible, meaningful, and engaging for their students. By focusing on these strategies, the study not only highlights the importance of teacher creativity but also underscores the value of adapting teaching practices to fit the specific needs of students in challenging environments. For example, the use of songs and games can be an effective way to teach vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar, while also keeping students engaged in the lesson. Storytelling, on the other hand, not only helps in building language skills but also makes learning more culturally relevant and relatable for students.

This research also holds practical implications for both teachers and policymakers. The findings of this study will provide teachers in similar resource-limited environments with effective teaching strategies that they can implement in their own classrooms. These strategies, which are based on creativity and resourcefulness, can help other educators in Indonesia and beyond adapt to similar challenges and improve their own teaching practices. For policymakers, this research offers valuable insights into the realities faced by teachers in resource-constrained settings, providing evidence to inform decisions on how to better support teachers through policies and initiatives. Such support might include professional development programs, better access to teaching materials, and the provision of low-cost teaching resources, all of which can help alleviate the challenges faced by teachers and improve the quality of education in elementary schools.

Furthermore, the significance of this study extends beyond the context of Yogyakarta. While the study focuses on public elementary schools in this specific region, the findings have broader applicability to other regions in Indonesia and similar contexts around the world. Many countries, particularly those with

developing education systems, face comparable challenges in providing high-quality education in resource-limited settings. The strategies identified in this study can be adapted to different cultural and educational contexts, offering solutions to teachers worldwide who are working in similar environments. As such, this research contributes not only to the local educational landscape but also to the global conversation on improving education in low-resource settings.

The researcher reviewed several studies to provide a strong foundation for this research on teaching English to young learners, particularly in resource-limited settings. (Mustafa, 2019) identified five key pillars for effective English teaching in Indonesia, emphasizing the need for teachers to understand how children learn and acquire language. The study also highlighted gaps in professional development, noting that many educators mistakenly believe advanced English proficiency is unnecessary for teaching young learners. (Restuningrum, 2019) examined teacher positioning in classroom interactions, revealing that physically positioning oneself at the students' level – such as sitting or kneeling – can foster a more inclusive and engaging learning environment. Observations of teachers in Jakarta demonstrated that strategic positioning contributes to student participation and interaction.

Building on these insights, the present study investigates the specific challenges faced by elementary school teachers in Yogyakarta in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). It aims to identify the difficulties educators encounter, examine the strategies they employ to overcome these challenges, and evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies in fostering language acquisition. Teaching English to young learners requires interactive, engaging, and developmentally appropriate methods; however, many educators struggle with limited resources, insufficient institutional support, and the challenge of sustaining student engagement and motivation. These constraints often hinder the implementation of effective teaching strategies, making it essential to explore alternative approaches tailored to the local context. By analysing the realities of EFL instruction in Yogyakarta, this study seeks to provide valuable insights into the dynamics of

teaching English in similar settings and offer practical recommendations for enhancing

Method

This study adopted a qualitative research approach (Creswell & Poth, 2018) to explore the challenges faced by elementary school teachers in Yogyakarta teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) and the strategies they use. Qualitative methods are effective for understanding lived experiences, especially in under-researched contexts (Patton, 2020). A descriptive qualitative design was chosen to provide a detailed account of teachers' experiences and strategies, as it is well-suited for analysing real-world events and offering insights into teaching practices in public elementary schools (Sandelowski, 2010).

The research was conducted at a public elementary school in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, to examine the challenges of teaching English as a foreign language to young learners. The study aimed to explore teachers' difficulties and strategies for fostering language acquisition. Data collection occurred over two weeks in November and December 2024, with one week for analysis. Three teachers with at least five years of experience were selected: Mary (class two), Susan (extracurricular English since 2018), and Lenny (class one since 2017). Pseudonyms were used to protect their identities, and their experience provided valuable insights into EFL instruction in early childhood education.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, combining predefined questions with flexibility to explore emerging topics (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The interviews focused on the challenges of teaching English to young learners and the strategies used to address them. One-on-one interviews, conducted in person or via WhatsApp, allowed participants to speak freely, with audio recordings made for accurate transcription. The interview guide, reviewed by an expert for clarity, was translated into Indonesian to minimize misunderstandings. This approach ensured flexibility while gathering detailed responses (Bryman, 2016)

instructional practices to improve learning outcomes for young students.

and allowed for deeper exploration of participants' perspectives (Patton, 2020).

The data collection process was divided into key stages to ensure systematic and ethical information gathering. First, the researcher developed an interview guideline aligned with the study's objectives, which was reviewed by an expert for clarity and relevance. In the second stage, participants were selected based on specific criteria, and after obtaining consent from school management, the researcher scheduled interviews with the teachers.

In the third stage, interviews were conducted either in person or via WhatsApp, depending on participants' preferences. Each interview lasted 8 to 10 minutes, and participants gave consent for recording. Finally, the fourth stage involved transcribing and analysing the recorded responses. Throughout the process, ethical guidelines were strictly followed to maintain confidentiality and accuracy.

The qualitative data analysis followed a three-step process: transcription, member checking, and coding. First, the researcher transcribed the interviews verbatim to maintain accuracy and organize the data for analysis. In the second step, member checking was done by returning the transcriptions to participants to verify accuracy and ensure their intentions were reflected correctly, enhancing the trustworthiness of the findings.

The final step, coding, involved categorizing the data to identify themes and patterns. The researcher used a four-step coding process: open coding to label initial categories, analytic coding to refine categories, axial coding to group related data, and selective coding to identify core categories and key conclusions. This systematic process allowed the researcher to draw meaningful insights and ensure a comprehensive analysis of the data.

Results and Discussion

There are two significant findings regarding the objectives of this study. First, the researcher reports teachers' challenges in teaching English as a foreign language to elementary school students. Second, the researcher presents how teachers' strategies to overcome the challenges of teaching English as a foreign language to elementary school students.

Challenges Face in Teaching English for Young Learners

The study identified six key challenges: difficulty with pronunciation, the need for repeated teaching, students' quick forgetfulness, repetitive explanations, differences in language spelling, and students' short attention spans and boredom.

Students' difficulty in pronunciation

One challenge in teaching English to elementary students is their difficulty with pronunciation. Teachers often introduce new vocabulary, and it becomes clear that students, especially those encountering English for the first time, struggle with pronunciation. Mary, one of the participants, noted that students find it hard to pronounce English words due to differences in how words are read in Indonesian and English. Susan, another participant, echoed this, explaining that students, who use local languages daily, are not accustomed to English and find it challenging because of the significant differences between English and Indonesian.

Pronunciation is a key challenge for students learning English, especially in resource-limited environments. (Isworo, 2021) highlights that Indonesian students struggle with English pronunciation due to differences in phonology between English and their native language. For instance, they find it difficult to pronounce sounds like "th" in words such as "this" or "think," as these sounds do not exist in Indonesian. Limited exposure to English outside the classroom further exacerbates this issue, making it harder for students to retain vocabulary and improve pronunciation.

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in elementary schools, particularly in

public schools in Indonesia, brings additional difficulties. These include pronunciation issues, challenges in vocabulary retention, and a lack of teaching materials and professional development opportunities. (Arslan & Karakus, 2020) suggest that these problems are worsened by the minimal exposure to English in students' daily lives. Teachers like Mary and Susan have observed similar pronunciation challenges in public schools in Yogyakarta, largely due to the discrepancies between English and Indonesian spelling and pronunciation.

Repeated teaching for students

Teachers often find themselves needing to repeat explanations and instructions to students, especially when teaching English to young learners. In these classrooms, teachers may need to go over the day's lesson multiple times and revisit what was learned in previous sessions. Susan, one of the participants in this study, emphasized this point, saying, "In the process of teaching English to children, I have to be extra in explaining the material being taught." Susan's statement highlights the importance of continuous guidance, as young children need more direction in their learning process.

Susan shared that in her classroom, students often struggle to understand instructions and explanations, necessitating multiple repetitions to ensure comprehension. She noted that this may be influenced by the children's age, as they are more inclined to play, which can affect their focus and understanding. (Hartina, 2019) emphasizes that young learners' developmental stage often makes it challenging for them to grasp explanations, requiring frequent reinforcement of concepts.

A major challenge for EFL teachers of young learners is the need to repeatedly teach concepts and vocabulary. Wang and Lee (2021) found that young learners, particularly in non-English-speaking environments, have difficulty retaining vocabulary due to limited exposure. This necessitates regular review, which can slow the language acquisition process. In bilingual classrooms, where students often switch languages, retention issues become more pronounced (Yusuf, 2021). Teachers in Yogyakarta have also observed that

students forget newly learned vocabulary quickly, requiring ongoing reinforcement.

Students forget quickly

At the developmental stage of young learners, it is common for students to have difficulty retaining information they have learned previously. This is especially true for children aged four to five, who are naturally inclined to play and often find it hard to focus during lessons. When these students are asked to engage in serious study, they tend to forget what they learned quickly. In the context of teaching English, participants in this study mentioned that many students struggle to remember vocabulary learned the previous day. This poses a challenge for teachers, who must repeatedly review the material to help students retain it.

Mary, the first participant in the study, confirmed this, stating, "Most students tend to forget what they have learned quickly." This can happen for a variety of reasons, such as limited memory capacity or lack of attention during the lesson. (Salija, n.d.) Salija (2019) noted that some students even play games during lessons instead of paying attention, further hindering their retention of the material. The tendency for young learners to forget quickly requires teachers to consistently revisit previously taught content to ensure better retention and learning progress.

Repeated explanations

Teaching young learners presents unique challenges, especially when delivering lessons in both the native and target languages. Participants in the study noted that using two languages during instruction often requires repeated explanations to ensure students fully understand the material.

Mary, one of the participants, shared that she had to repeat her explanations in Indonesian after providing them in English because not all students could understand everything in English. This highlights the challenge of varying proficiency levels in the target language, particularly when English is taught as a foreign language. This repetition can become a time-management issue, as teachers must balance the use of both

languages to avoid overwhelming students while ensuring the lesson moves at a reasonable pace.

Lenny, another participant, echoed these concerns, noting the difficulty of adjusting lesson themes in both Indonesian and English. (Vaish, 2019) suggests that bilingual classrooms can be particularly challenging, as children often feel more comfortable in their native language. However, educators must prioritize teaching in the target language while finding ways to bridge the gap for students who struggle with understanding content in English.

Difficulty in Spelling.

Teaching spelling in English presents a unique challenge for young learners, especially in bilingual classrooms. Susan, the second participant, shared that students in bilingual classes often struggle with reading English words because the spelling rules differ from those of Indonesian. She explained, "Students in bilingual classes often find it difficult to understand how to read English words because they cannot spell it like learning to read Indonesian." This challenge is exacerbated by the differences between the two languages. For example, she recalled a student asking, "Why can't English be spelled like Indonesian?" Susan clarified that in Indonesian, words like "guru" are split into "gu-ru," while in English, words like "teacher" cannot follow the same pattern. This linguistic difference complicates the process for both teachers and students.

These spelling difficulties align with the findings of (Aisyah, 2022), who observed that the spelling conventions in Indonesian differ from those in English. Both Susan and Mary noted that while some students have trouble pronouncing English words due to these differences, others manage to understand and pronounce them correctly. This issue is supported by (Zhang, 2020), who highlighted those inconsistencies in English spelling and pronunciation, such as silent letters and irregular verb forms, can confuse young learners. These challenges are particularly pronounced in environments with limited exposure to English, making it harder for students to grasp the complexities of English spelling and pronunciation.

Short attention span and easily bored

Elementary school students are at an age where play is central to their lives, which can result in short attention spans and quick disengagement during lessons. The third participant highlighted this challenge, noting that some students in her class struggled to maintain focus and often lost interest during lessons. Bakhsh (2016) states that young learners frequently become impatient and bored when language lessons last too long. Lenny shared an example where students would get distracted by objects around them, creating their own world and ignoring the teacher's explanations. Additionally, students

with short attention spans are easily distracted by their peers, as one active student tried to engage another in conversation, pulling their focus away from the lesson.

This behaviour was also observed by Susan, who noted that such distractions are common in bilingual classrooms. She explained, "Children, at their age, really enjoy playing. So, when we ask them to focus on learning, some of them have difficulty doing so." This observation aligns with research suggesting that young learners struggle to focus on classrooms, especially when lessons lack interactive elements to capture their attention.

Strategies in overcoming the challenges

The researcher focusses on the way teachers implement the strategies do teachers' use in overcoming the challenges while teaching English as a foreign language to elementary school students. The data collected from the interview showed that there are four strategies implemented by the teacher. The findings involve fun songs and videos, games activities, question and answer, and ice breaking.

learning through engaging activities. Susan, for instance, regularly incorporated interactive cartoon videos into her lessons, noting, "When I played the video, the children were very happy and enthusiastic." After watching the video, she encouraged the children to guess English words featured in it, further fostering an exciting and interactive learning environment. This method of using songs and videos has proven to be effective for teaching preschool students.

Using fun songs and videos

Teachers working with young children often use fun songs and videos as part of their teaching strategies, which fall under fun learning methods. These approaches are considered some of the best for engaging young learners, as children have a natural inclination to play. All three participants in the study emphasized their use of these techniques in preschool English classes. Susan, the second participant, shared, "Currently, there are lots of fun learning themes for children in English, and children love these themes, especially when learning through colourful pictures, singing fun songs, and watching cartoon videos in English."

Using game activities

The second strategy used by participants in teaching English to preschool students is incorporating game activities. Game-based learning is particularly effective for addressing the challenges teachers face with young learners. It aligns with children's developmental stages and interests, making it an engaging method for language acquisition. The first participant shared, "When they were invited to play a game, the children would feel happy," highlighting how games foster a positive and enjoyable learning environment. The second participant also observed, "Children like to play, so using play activities to teach English enhances their knowledge." Experts, such as Choiriyah (2021), support this approach, noting that inquiry-based games promote happiness, self-confidence, and competitiveness in young learners.

Research supports the idea that young learners enjoy learning through activities that involve play, movement, and hands-on experiences (Priyatni, 2019). This was reflected in the study, where participants observed that children are more motivated and happier when

A common game activity mentioned by the participants is the "guessing game." The third participant shared an example of introducing the theme of professions by

showing pictures and asking students to guess the profession. The second participant also used games by providing papers or books with random English words, asking students to circle or underline the words. These game activities are ideal for preschool learners, increasing enthusiasm and improving memory retention of new vocabulary. Through such interactive methods, children can engage with the language in a playful and meaningful way.

Using questions and answers

One effective strategy used by participants in teaching English to preschool students is the implementation of question-and-answer sessions to regain focus when students become distracted. As the third participant noted, distractions from peers are a common classroom challenge. To address this, the teacher uses questions related to the current lesson. For example, during a lesson on professions, if a student becomes distracted, the teacher might ask, "What is the English word for firefighter?" This helps refocus the student and brings their attention back to the lesson.

To encourage participation and build confidence, the teacher invites the rest of the class to clap when the student answers correctly. This positive reinforcement not only helps regain focus but also boosts the student's confidence. The strategy serves as an opportunity to assess students' ability to recall and apply English vocabulary, promoting both speaking and listening skills in a supportive environment.

This technique also allows teachers to gauge students' understanding and language proficiency. According to Nikijuluw and Puspitasari (2018), such strategies improve speaking abilities by encouraging students to elaborate on their ideas and engage actively. By incorporating question-and-answer sessions, teachers create a dynamic and interactive

Conclusion

This study examined the challenges elementary school teachers in Yogyakarta face in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) and the strategies they use to overcome these difficulties. Based on interviews with three participants, six key challenges were identified:

learning environment, which enhances student focus and deepens their understanding of the material.

Using ice breaking

Icebreaker activities are commonly used by teachers to regain students' focus and energize them during English lessons. These activities are designed to re-establish an engaging and positive classroom atmosphere, especially when students become distracted. Icebreakers help reset the environment to a more enthusiastic state, ensuring a conducive learning atmosphere (Harianja & Sapri, 2022).

The participants in the study often used icebreakers to bring students' focus back, particularly at the start of class or when students became disengaged. The activities varied but typically included songs, clapping, and simple physical movements. For example, one participant frequently began lessons with the song "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes," which engaged students through music and kinaesthetic movement, reinforcing language learning.

Another participant used physical commands like "clap-clap" and "jump-jump" to engage students in the lesson. These icebreakers helped students refocus by incorporating physical activity, making the classroom dynamic and increasing concentration.

Icebreakers are beneficial not only in refocusing students but also in promoting emotional well-being by creating a fun and supportive environment. In resource-limited settings, where students may become distracted due to a lack of stimulating resources, icebreakers are especially effective (Henkel, 2020). These activities maintain student enthusiasm, making learning more enjoyable and effective.

pronunciation difficulties due to differences in phonology, the need for repeated teaching and explanations, students' tendency to forget vocabulary quickly, struggles with English spelling, and short attention spans leading to boredom. These issues stem from young learners' cognitive development, minimal

exposure to English outside the classroom, and limited institutional support.

To address these challenges, teachers implemented four main strategies: incorporating fun songs and videos, using game-based activities to enhance motivation and retention, applying question-and-answer techniques to sustain student focus, and conducting icebreaker activities to regain attention. While these strategies proved effective in keeping students engaged and improving learning outcomes, persistent challenges remain due to the lack of standardized EFL curricula, insufficient teaching resources, and limited training opportunities for teachers. This highlights the need for structured teaching approaches, professional development programs, and greater institutional support to enhance English instruction for young learners.

References

- Aisyah, H. (2022). The Role of Language Acquisition: A Study of Pronunciation Difficulties in Indonesian Learners of English. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching*, 15(3), 221-234.
- Arslan, A., & Karakus, M. (2020). Challenges of Teaching English as a Second Language in Primary Schools: Teachers Perspectives. *International Journal of Educational Research Open*.
- Bakhsh, T. (2016). Language Learning in Early Childhood: Challenges and Strategies for Engagement. *Journal of Early Education Studies*, 5(3), 45-60.
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social Research Method* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Cahyani, S. (2021). Challenges in Teaching English as a Foreign English in Resource Limited Elementary Schools: A Case Study in Indonesia. *Journal of Education and Teaching*, 23(4), 451-467.
- Choiriyah, A. (2021). Inquiry-based Games in Early Childhood Education: Enhancing Learning through Play. *Journal of Early Childhood Education*, 19(4), 305-320.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- DiCicco-Bloom, B., & Crabtree, B. F. (2006). The Qualitative Research Interview. *Medical Education*, 40(4), 314-321.
- Harianja, G., & Sapri, S. (2022). The Role of Icebreakers in Maintaining Classroom Focus and Creating a Conducive Learning Environment. *Journal of Education Research and Practice*, 10(3), 75-84.
- Hartina, M. (2019). Challenges in Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Young Learners in Bilingual Classrooms. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 15(3), 205-219.
- Henkel, M. (2020). Challenges of Teaching English in Resource-constrained Environment. *TESOLJournal*, 11(2), 167-185.
- Isworo. (2021). Phonological Challenges in English Pronunciation for Indonesian Students: A Study on Segmental Sounds. *Indonesian Journal of Linguistics*, 39(1), 47-63.
- To improve EFL instruction, teacher training programs should be strengthened through regular workshops on pronunciation techniques, classroom engagement, and phonics-based instruction. Classroom strategies should include phonetic drills, repetition-based learning, and interactive activities like action songs and storytelling to address pronunciation, vocabulary retention, and short attention spans. Technology, such as language learning apps and animated videos, should be integrated into lessons, while policymakers should establish standardized EFL curricula and ensure access to appropriate teaching materials. Additionally, parental involvement should be encouraged through simple home-based English activities and family literacy programs. Implementing these recommendations can enhance EFL instruction, leading to improved language acquisition, greater student motivation, and a more effective learning experience.

- Mustafa, H. (2019). Essential Requirement for Teaching English to Young Learners in Indonesia. *Asean EFL Journal*, 21(3), 78–92.
- Nikijuluw, F., & Puspitasari, D. (2018). The Influence of Teacher's Strategies on the Development of Speaking Skills in Young Learners. *Journal of English Education*, 5(2), 45–56.
- Patton, M. Q. (2020). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Priyatni, S. (2019). Young Learners and Their Learning Preferences in EFL Classrooms. *Language Education Today*, 18(2), 88–103.
- Restuningrum, L. (2019). Teachers' Positioning Strategy in Teaching Young Learners. *Journal of Language and Pedagogy*, 5(4), 102–117.
- Saliya, N. (n.d.). *Students' Tendencies to Engage in Other Activities, Such as Playing Games, during Lessons in stead of Focusing on Learning*.
- Sandelowski, M. (n.d.). What's in a Name? Qualitative Description Revisited. *Research in Nursing and Health*, 33(1), 77–84.
- Snow, C. E. (2010). Academic Language and the Challenge of Reading for Learning about Science. *Science*, 328(5977), 450–452.
- Vaish, V. (2019). *Teaching English in Bilingual Classrooms: Balancing Native Language and Target Language Use*.
- Wang, X., & Lee, M. (n.d.). Repeated Teaching and Vocabulary Retention in Early Language Education. *Language Teaching Research*, 25(2), 230–244.
- Yusuf, A. (2021). Innovations in Project-based Language Learning for Young Learners [Video recording]. In *Language Education Today* (Vol. 18, Issue 4, pp. 98–112).
- Yusuf, M. (n.d.). English Language Education in Indonesia: Globalization, Policy, and Practice. *Asian Englishes*, 23(3), 278–297.
- Yusuf, M. (2021). The Impact of Bilingualism on Language Retention: An Analysis of EFL Learners in Indonesia. *Language Education Research*, 19(4), 45–59.
- Zhang, L. (2012). The Benefits of Early Foreign Language Learning. *International Journal of Early Childhood Education*, 18(2), 55–67.
- Zhang, Y. (2020). Challenges in English Spelling for Young Learners: A Focus on Irregularities and Silent Letters. *Language Development Review*, 32(4), 320–336.