

ANALYSIS OF THE USE AND SUITABILITY OF ENGLISH TEACHING MATERIALS AND MEDIA IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES AND LEARNING CHALLENGES

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the use and appropriateness of English teaching materials in elementary schools from the perspective of teachers, with a particular focus on the challenges they face during implementation. The research specifically investigates how English teaching materials are implemented in the classroom, how relevant they are to students' needs, and what obstacles arise during its implementation. The method used in this study was a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative data collected through questionnaires and qualitative insights obtained from in-depth interviews with English teachers from several elementary schools. The findings show that although official textbooks are still the main source of teaching material, many teachers still complement them with digital resources such as videos, songs, and interactive media. These additions are used to make lessons more engaging and to help students better understand the content. However, teachers report facing several challenges, including limited supporting infrastructure, a lack of audiovisual materials, and the limited of English learning media as teaching resources, which often makes it difficult for both teachers and students to fully grasp the material. Many teachers express a great need for more diverse and contextually relevant materials that include audiovisual support in every chapter and bilingual content (Indonesian and English). They believe these improvements would help create a more effective, inclusive, and student-friendly learning experience in English classrooms.

Keywords: Elementary School, English, Media, Teaching Materials

INTRODUCTION

The English language has become increasingly essential for young learners in today's globalized world, driven by the growing demand for effective cross-linguistic communication in various fields. English serves not only as an international communication tool but also supports children's cognitive development, literacy, and emotional readiness to face the challenges of the 21st century. Therefore, strengthening early English education is a strategic effort to prepare a skilled and globally competent generation. Consequently, English is being introduced at earlier educational stages, including primary schools. In Indonesia, the urgency of English language proficiency at the primary school level has gained momentum alongside recent changes in national education policy. Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Number 12 of 2024 mandates that English will become a compulsory subject at the primary school level starting from the 2027/2028 academic year (Kemendikbud, 2024). Although curriculum revisions are necessary for improving learning quality, English at the primary level remains an elective subject, with its implementation contingent on school readiness and the availability of qualified teachers (Falah et al., 2023).

Several factors must be considered to effectively implement English lessons in elementary schools, including teacher preparedness, students' English proficiency, teaching materials, and supportive learning media that enhance students' interest and understanding. Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to children presents specific challenges, such as limited learning resources, restricted exposure to English outside the classroom, and language barriers. Nevertheless, childhood remains a critical period for language acquisition and the development of comprehension skills. Therefore, the use of effective learning strategies and the design of teaching materials that align with students' characteristics are

essential (Ahmad et al., 2024). Equally important is the integration of appropriate learning media that can reinforce the content of teaching materials and accommodate different learning styles. The combination of engaging materials and interactive media can create a more stimulating learning environment, helping students to better grasp vocabulary, pronunciation, and contextual language use.

Teaching materials, as defined by (Tomlinson, 2023) include any resources used by language learners to facilitate the learning process, such as textbooks, storybooks, songs, videos, cartoons, dictionaries, and various other media. Baron (2017) add that six types of Open Educational Resources (OER) can be utilized in English reading classes: printed textbooks, online teaching materials, journals, technology applications, learning websites, and e-books. Effective teaching materials not only meet curriculum requirements but also correspond to students' learning styles and local contexts. At the elementary level, teaching materials play a vital role in shaping students' learning experiences, as learners are still developing their language and cognitive abilities. According to (Puspita and Rosnaningsih, 2024), teaching materials make the learning process more engaging, practical, and relevant to real life, while enabling both teachers and students to participate actively and effectively in each learning session. However, textbook materials are often too difficult for students to comprehend, leading to decreased interest and motivation that may undermine learning effectiveness (Nurfadila et al., 2024). Additionally, (Daud, 2024) highlights several challenges in teaching English in Indonesian primary schools, including a shortage of qualified English teachers, shifting language policies, limited learning resources, restricted instructional time, and minimal exposure to English.

Previous research by (Ariani et al., 2024) focused on developing differentiated digital supplementary English teaching materials aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum. Their study found that digital materials created using platforms such as Canva were highly effective because they were tailored to students' learning styles and validated by experts and teachers as appropriate in terms of needs and digital media aspects. This research is relevant because it shares a similar focus on analyzing the use and suitability of English teaching materials in elementary schools from the perspectives of both teachers and students. The study also highlighted similar challenges, notably the dominance of text-heavy materials that insufficiently support diverse learning styles. The proposed solution, the development of more varied and contextual digital teaching materials offers valuable reference points for improving teaching materials in this study. In addition to teaching materials, the use of appropriate learning media plays a crucial role in enhancing students' engagement and comprehension, particularly through visual, auditory, and interactive elements. Integrating diverse digital and non-digital media is therefore essential to create a more dynamic and meaningful English learning experience for young learners.

This study aims to examine how elementary school teachers implement English teaching materials and media during the learning process, evaluate the relevance of these materials and media to students' abilities, learning interests, and needs, and identify the challenges teachers face in utilizing them in elementary school settings. By analyzing the practices, relevance, and challenges associated with English teaching materials and media in primary schools, this research is expected to provide constructive insights for developing more adaptive, contextual, and student-centered materials and media. The findings are anticipated to serve as a valuable reference for teachers, curriculum developers, and policymakers in designing more effective English teaching strategies and learning resources, especially in preparation for the implementation of English as a compulsory subject at the elementary school level.

METHODS

This study employs a mixed methods approach with an explanatory sequential design with quantitative and qualitative data. This means that quantitative data collection and analysis through questionnaires are conducted first, followed by qualitative data collection and analysis through interviews to clarify and deepen the findings from the questionnaires. The explanatory sequential design is chosen to allow the quantitative results to guide the selection of participants for the qualitative phase, ensuring a richer and more nuanced understanding of the phenomena being studied. According to (Abikou & Haruna, 2025), combining questionnaires to obtain quantitative prevalence data and semi-structured interviews to gather in-depth narratives is a common and effective approach to acquire more comprehensive and well-rounded data.

The subjects of this study are 28 elementary school teachers who all teach English subjects. These respondents come from diverse educational backgrounds and have varied teaching experiences, which provide a broad perspective on the implementation of English teaching materials across different school

contexts. Most respondents are graduates of Elementary School Teacher Education (PGSD), totaling 24 individuals. Additionally, 3 respondents hold degrees in English Education or English Literature, while 1 respondent graduated from Physical Education, Health, and Recreation (PJKR). In terms of teaching experience, the majority have taught for 1–5 years (19 respondents), 6 have between 6–10 years of experience, and 3 have taught for more than 10 years. Regarding the type of schools where they teach, most respondents work in public elementary schools (20 schools), while the remaining teach in private elementary schools (3 schools). This diversity in educational background, teaching experience, and school type allows for a more comprehensive exploration of the challenges and practices in using English teaching materials in elementary schools.

Data in this study were collected through two primary instruments: a questionnaire and open-ended interviews. The questionnaire, consisting of 30 items measured using a five-point Likert scale (ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree), was administered to all 28 teacher respondents. It aimed to quantitatively assess aspects such as teachers' attitudes, competencies, perceptions, and the challenges they encounter in using English teaching materials and media in elementary schools. To complement the quantitative data, open-ended interviews were conducted with selected participants using a purposive sampling technique. These interviews sought to obtain more in-depth insights and contextual explanations that could not be fully captured through the questionnaire responses. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify overall trends and patterns, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically to uncover recurring ideas and perspectives. The integration of both data types was intended to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of teachers' perspectives on the use and suitability of English teaching materials and media in elementary education.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of English language learning in elementary schools

The implementation of English language learning in primary schools heavily depends on the teachers as the main facilitators. All respondents in this study are teachers who teach English in primary schools, although most of them (24 out of 28) come from an Elementary School Teacher Education (PGSD) background. The majority of teachers reported lacking confidence in teaching English, especially those teaching far from the city center, such as in the Sukabumi area. This finding aligns with (Song et al., 2025) research, which revealed significant differences in professional identity, self-efficacy, and perceptions of the school environment among teachers in various regions, where teachers in suburban and rural areas tend to have lower confidence due to limited prior experience learning English.

Nonetheless, most teachers feel sufficiently capable of teaching English despite not having an English education background. All primary schools where these teachers teach use teaching materials to support the English learning process, with a variety of brands and content. Regarding language usage, only about 24% of the teaching materials are entirely in English, while the remainder combines Indonesian and English, with English proportions ranging from 60% to 90%.

Use of English Language Teaching Materials and Media

English teaching materials are used regularly in learning activities. Most teachers rely on official textbooks provided by schools or the government as the primary resource. However, many teachers actively seek additional teaching materials, particularly digital resources such as applications, videos, and online media, to complement and enrich the learning content. This finding supports (Nova Mandaria & Karani, 2021) conclusion that alternative media like videos and YouTube content can increase students' enthusiasm and happiness during learning.

Suitability of Teaching Materials and Media to Student Needs

Overall, the content in English teaching materials is considered appropriate for the abilities of primary school students, especially those who already have a good command of Indonesian or attend English courses outside school. The materials are also relevant to students' daily life contexts, although local wisdom aspects are still underrepresented. The materials provide various activities catering to different learning styles, but some teachers feel that more variation is needed to better match the diverse characteristics of students. The materials contribute to developing the four English language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), but their effectiveness is more evident for students with a

strong Indonesian language foundation. Students with weaker Indonesian skills tend to struggle due to differences in structure and vocabulary between the two languages.

Effectiveness and Student Motivation in Using Teaching Materials and Media

The teaching materials used are sufficiently effective in enhancing students' interest in English. Students show high enthusiasm, especially when using multimedia-based materials such as songs, videos, and interactive games. These supporting media help students understand the material in a fun and accessible way. However, some teachers feel that the current teaching materials are not fully adequate to support comprehensive learning objectives, mainly due to the limited availability of supporting media. Therefore, teachers often seek additional learning resources outside the official materials to improve effectiveness and student motivation.

Challenges in the Use of Teaching Materials and Media

Teachers face several challenges in using English teaching materials. A primary issue is the lack of use of Indonesian as the first language in the teaching materials. Since many students still have limited Indonesian skills, the use of bilingual materials is seen as helpful to achieve learning goals. This aligns with findings by (Gultom et al., 2022), who stated that students mostly use their mother tongue outside school, so teachers must work harder to help students get accustomed to English. Furthermore, the limited learning time of only once a week hampers optimal language acquisition.

Another challenge for teachers is adjusting teaching materials to students' abilities and characteristics. Many materials are text-heavy, while students face difficulties, especially in pronunciation. This problem is compounded by the fact that most teachers do not have an English education background but come from PGSD, leading to low confidence in explaining English material without Indonesian assistance. The lack of audio or video pronunciation examples also hinders both teachers and students, as they struggle with spelling and pronouncing English words. Supporting facilities such as audio devices and projectors are still inadequate, particularly in the Sukabumi area, affecting the effective use of learning media.

Expectations for the Development of Teaching Materials and Media

Teachers stated that they were heavy workload, especially for class teachers who teach multiple subjects, makes it difficult to develop or adapt teaching materials. As a result, teachers must independently find supplementary media such as songs, videos, or other sources outside official materials, which are mostly text-based without adequate multimedia features. (Hori et al., 2025) found that learning through applications is more effective than digital books for grammar comprehension and significantly improves satisfaction and persistence. This finding aligns with most teachers' hopes that future English teaching materials will be bilingual, with Indonesian as the primary instructional language to ease the learning process, particularly for students struggling with English. Teachers also wish for more varied materials supported by learning media such as songs, videos, and interactive games to enhance student engagement. They agree that each material section should include audio or video to assist students in spelling and pronunciation. This is in line with the research conducted by (Usman & Anwar, 2021), which developed an English teaching material in the form of a module based on the integrated language skills approach. The validation results showed that the module has an impact on improving students' competence in English, and the teaching material has met the appropriate characteristics for instructional materials.

Furthermore, teaching material and media development is expected to pay greater attention to student needs and characteristics, making the materials more relevant and effective. This is in line with (Hasanah et al., 2023) stated that teachers need effective, flexible, and easy-to-use media that support both teachers and students in actively exploring concepts, if the limitations of such media are not addressed promptly, the learning process may become less meaningful for students. Lastly, teachers express the desire to be directly involved in material development to ensure the final product truly meets the needs in the field, both from teachers' and students' perspectives.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that elementary school teachers, although mostly coming from an Elementary School Teacher Education (PGSD) background, routinely use English teaching materials in the learning process. Official textbooks provided by the government remain the primary source, but teachers actively

seek supplementary materials, especially digital media such as songs, videos, and learning applications. These teaching materials are quite helpful, particularly for students with strong proficiency in Indonesian. However, the limited availability of audiovisual media and the full use of English remain significant challenges that hinder the comprehension of both students and teachers during the learning process.

The recommendation from this research is development of English teaching materials for elementary schools should be bilingual, with Indonesian serving as a supporting instructional language to facilitate students' understanding, especially for those with limited proficiency in English and Indonesian. Multimedia learning resources such as audio, video, songs, and interactive games need to be integrated to make the learning process more engaging, effective, and supportive of pronunciation skills and material comprehension. Moreover, direct involvement of teachers in the development of teaching materials is crucial to ensure that the materials align with students' needs, characteristics, and the real challenges faced in the classroom. Based on the results obtained, the development of teaching materials integrated with learning media that are relevant to students' needs, particularly in vocabulary learning should be a key consideration for future research.

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