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*Research Article*

# The Implementation of TEYL in Indonesia Revisited: A Study at Primary Schools in Bandung

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## Abstract

This study explored Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) implementation in elementary schools in Bandung, Indonesia. Surveys, interviews, observation, and document analysis were used to obtain data. The survey was distributed to 30 TEYL teachers from 30 schools within the region. Interviews were conducted with four teachers from four different schools. The data were triangulated and descriptively examined to assess TEYL in primary schools. The findings showed a mismatch between the government's policy on English instruction in primary schools and TEYL's implementation. In the 30 schools investigated, English was taught as local content in 21 schools (70%) and extracurricular in 7 schools (23%). Meanwhile, only 2 schools (7%) did not conduct English in their teaching-learning process. Due to the lack of government supervision, teachers are free to construct their own TEYL course content. According to the interviews, adopting TEYL is challenging due to varying teacher abilities and the availability of school's infrastructure. The discussion suggests some recommendations on how to utilize the TEYL curriculum in Indonesian's primary schools effectively.

## Keywords

TEYL; primary schools; Bandung; Indonesia; implementations.

## Introduction

The widespread introduction of English in primary schools has been described by Johnstone (2009) as possibly the world's biggest policy development in education. The growth in teaching English to young learners has not been universally endorsed, however. The assumed benefits of an early start are controversial (Myles, 2017; Pfenninger & Lendl, 2017), especially in situations of minimal input, rather than language immersion (Johnstone, 2018; Borey, 2020). There has also been widespread criticism of policies that are generally imposed in a top-down manner and often without sufficient preparation (Enever et al., 2009; Güngör & Geçikli, 2021).

Teaching English to young learners (henceforth EYL) has been a worldwide phenomenon for the past two decades (Rich, 2014). EYL is the world's largest educational policy development, according to Johnstone (2018), with substantial consequences for educational practice. More than 60 countries now



have regulations requiring the inclusion of English in primary school curriculum or even kindergarten, according to a 2013 British Council survey (Rixon, 2013). The member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have also recognized the inevitability of English's influence and benefits in Southeast Asia. English language instruction in elementary and even secondary schools has become a frequent practice.

Numerous publications exist on the policy and practice of English language instruction in Asian elementary schools (Zein, 2017; Taghizadeh, & Yourdshahi, 2020). However, there are relatively few studies that examine EYL policy and implementation in ASEAN member nations in detail. Therefore, authors tried to explore Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) implementation in elementary schools in Indonesia. English for Young Learners (EYL) was introduced in Indonesian primary schools in 1994 (Indonesia Ministry of Education Decree 060/U/1993). However, due to the decentralization of education in Indonesia, local governments have been encouraged to use some learning hours for what has become known as "local contents" (Jalal & Musthafa, 2001; Musthafa, 2010). During the previous decades, this decentralized decision-making increased public interest in English for Young Learners (EYL). English was taught in many primary schools, particularly in cities. The 2013 primary school curriculum did not include English as a local subject (Curriculum structure of 2013 curriculum).

Teaching English to young learners in Indonesian primary schools is primarily intended to introduce students to the existence of a language other than their mother tongue. As a result, English should be taught through activities relevant to the children's lives. For example, children can learn vocabulary and simple sentences about their surroundings by singing, drawing, playing games, telling stories, and participating in other children's activities. In addition, students are assigned translation, grammar rules, and homework with ambiguous teacher instructions (Suyanto, 2003). Given the current state of TEYL in Indonesia, the present study seeks to look into the practice and implementation of teaching English to young learners in primary schools.

The study sampled Bandung primary schools because Bandung is one of Indonesia's largest cities, and English is recommended as a preferred local content for primary school instruction. According to data from the Bandung Ministry of Education, the city of Bandung has 460 primary schools. In addition, there are 274 public schools and 186 private schools located throughout the city. Even though English is the preferred local content, the head of the Bandung education department advised all schools to include English as local content or extracurricular subject. Therefore, teachers who teach English in their schools are responsible for developing the curriculum and ensuring that it is implemented effectively in classroom instruction. As a result, TEYL will vary from school to school. Mostly determined by the resources available to the school, notably teachers' expertise and school's infrastructure.

This study aimed to glance at how English instruction is implemented in primary schools. Because it is critical to understand how English instruction for young learners in primary schools has been executed in Indonesian primary schools following the implementation of the revised/latest curriculum. It is also significant to comprehend the advantages and disadvantages of TEYL adoption in school systems. Therefore, this study examined 30 public and private primary schools to ascertain the extent to which the EYL is implemented. Below are the research questions carried out in this study:

- a. What is the status of TEYL implementation in primary schools in Bandung?
- b. What are the issues that may come up in the TEYL implementation in Bandung's primary schools?

## Method

This study employed a qualitative approach. The study attempted to provide a systematic description of the circumstances surrounding a phenomenon that is as factual and accurate as possible without manipulating or interfering with the observed phenomenon. Qualitative research employs various



methods and takes an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject. This means that qualitative researchers observe phenomena in their natural environment, attempting to understand or interpret them in terms of the meaning ascribed to them by individuals. This research used an open-ended questionnaire, interviews, school and classroom observations, and document analysis to acquire data (Malik & Hamied, 2017). These data were gathered to characterize TEYL deployment in Bandung elementary schools.

This research is being undertaken at a number of elementary schools in Bandung, Indonesia, both public and private. To get a snapshot of how English is taught to young learners in Bandung, the researchers visited 30 schools around the city: six in north Bandung, six in south Bandung, six in west Bandung, six in east Bandung, and six in central Bandung. The researchers then visited four schools to see how TEYL is implemented in elementary schools in Bandung. The schools were chosen based on their use of English as a core subject or extracurricular activity and their curriculum. The researchers interviewed 30 teachers first and then delved further into the four instructors mentioned above to learn more about the implementation and problems of TEYL in Bandung primary schools.

## Results and Discussion

### The Implementation of Teaching English to Young Learners in Bandung Primary Schools

English has been excluded from the curriculum in Indonesian elementary schools since the 2013 curriculum was enacted. English was no longer a compulsory subject in schools but an extracurricular activity. Indeed, there are several strategies for teaching English in elementary schools. By sampling all locations, the findings were expected to reflect the complete implementation of TEYL in Bandung. The researchers used regional samples to demonstrate English instruction in Bandung primary schools. The purpose was to illustrate the condition of English instruction for Bandung's primary school students.

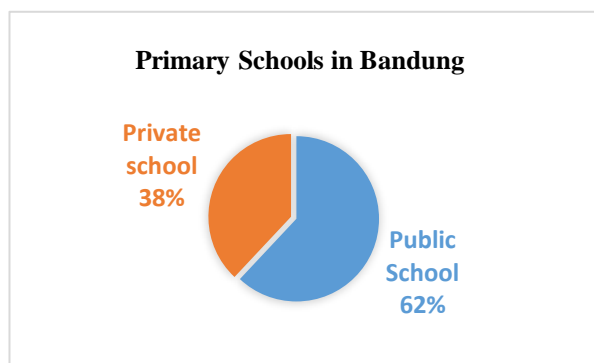


Figure 1. Type of school

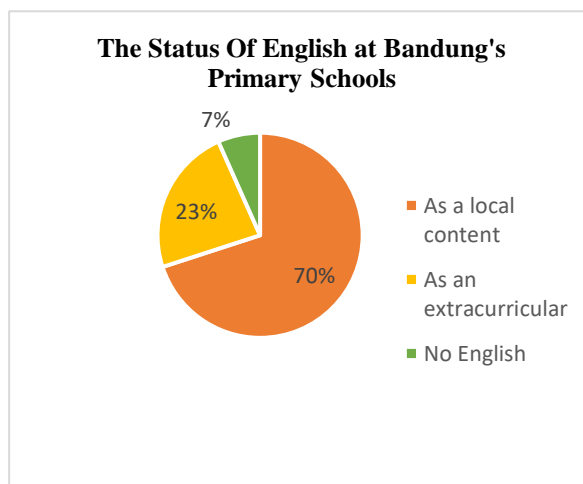


Figure 2. The status of English

Thirty primary schools were picked from five Bandung districts: east Bandung, west Bandung, north Bandung, south Bandung, and central Bandung. TEYL was used in a variety of ways in primary schools. Some schools included English as a local content requirement, while others added it as extracurricular activities. Only a few schools did not have English as a local content requirement or added it as an extracurricular. Twenty-one of the thirty schools investigated taught English as a local subject, seven taught it as an extracurricular, and just two did not teach it at all.

TEYL in primary schools relies on the headmaster's policies. The 2013 curriculum made English an extra-curricular activity, while the 2016 curriculum gave schools more autonomy in teaching English. The following are excerpts from conversations with school principals and instructors about English in their schools.

"Modern English is vital. Thus, ESL teaching must begin in primary school. The 2013 curriculum includes English extra-curricular activities; however, English is still taught in the morning at our school, implying English was handled as a local curriculum due to staff and resources." (Principal 1)

If English isn't taught local, it's an extra-curricular activity. Due to this, each school had its policy; some taught English as part of the provincial curriculum, others as an elective, and still others did not teach English at all. (Principal 2)

Instructors and parents were perplexed as to why some schools, notably public schools, were operated in English while others were not. According to the authority's declaration, a school may or may not give an English education. This shows that elementary schools have various policies on teaching English. The researchers addressed the director of Bandung's primary school curriculum department to inquire about English in elementary schools.

"In a revised curriculum, English can be taught as an extra-curricular activity. But schools can teach English or not. In Bandung, I recommend that students be taught English in line with school capabilities." (Curriculum Department Delegation from Ministry of Education and Culture)

Since the 2013 curriculum was adopted in primary schools, there was no longer any TEYL training or workshops for teachers, as English was not included in the primary school curriculum framework. However, some institutions continued to teach English in the classroom due to their preparedness with skilled instructors and facilities. After interviewing several instructors, it became clear that they required further training and workshops on how to teach children in an acceptable manner. After interviewing 30 instructors, it was discovered that 17 had more than five years of experience, six had three to four years of experience, three had 1-2 years of experience, and only four had less than one year of experience. According to the instructors' backgrounds, 12 were in English education, 2 were in English literature (non-education), and 16 were in non-English departments.

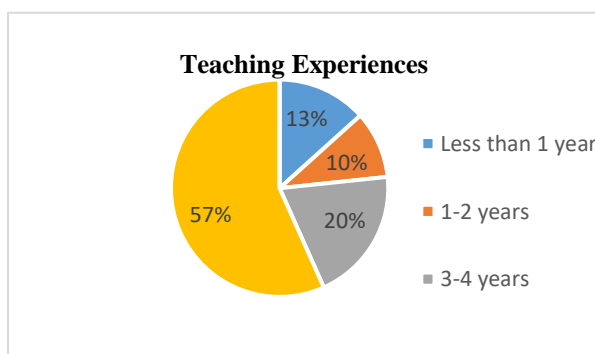


Figure 3. Experience in TEYL

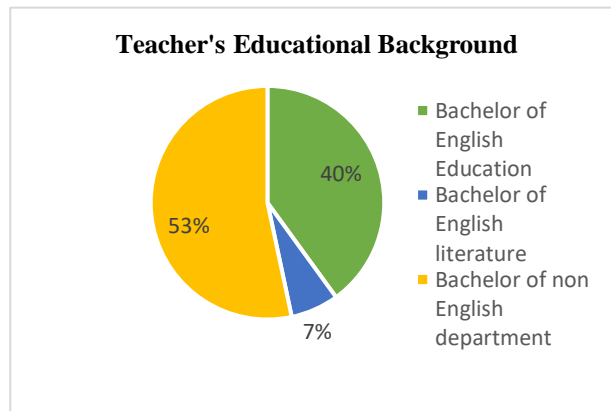


Figure 4. Educational background

Most teachers have over five years of experience. Because English was not a mandated subject in the curriculum, it was unclear where English teachers should teach. Some teachers moved to other primary schools providing English lessons, while others remained because English was taught in extra-curricular activities. Six instructors had attended TEYL training and workshops more than five times, seven had gone three to four times, twelve had gone once, and five had never participated.

The researchers studied four public and private schools to discover more about how English is taught to young learners in primary schools. The researcher focused on the planning, development, and assessment of the program at each school to learn more about its implementation.

### 1.1 Planning

Language instruction requires careful planning, and the syllabus serves as the starting point for building a language program. Therefore, the selection and sequencing of instructional content focus on syllabus design. The curriculum and lesson plans of the four schools under inquiry in this part were studied by the researchers. The researchers assessed four schools based on the status of English in the classroom and the curriculum they developed. Its purpose is to learn about how English is taught in schools. The researchers investigated four schools. English is taught as a local content subject in two public schools, and it is also offered as an extracurricular activity. Other schools used a variety of English curricula. The curriculum and syllabus were developed individually by the schools' English instructors, based on student requirements and teachers' abilities.

The first public school to teach English as a second language follows a curriculum devised by the government. Teachers have continued to use the previous curriculum, the 2006 curriculum or school-based curriculum, which featured English as a local topic and was created by the government. Despite the government's refusal to include English as a subject in the primary school curriculum framework, the teacher elected to teach English as a local content at school. English was taught in schools as local content to retain the existing curricular structure. The school's principal has authorized this policy. Teachers and the principal agree that children should acquire English as a second language in elementary school. The headmaster then arranged time in the classroom for English to integrate into the learning process.

According to Taba's model of curriculum processes, the teacher was responsible for all phases of the curriculum: diagnosis of needs, formulation of objectives, selection of content, organization of content, selection of learning experiences, organization of learning experiences, and determination of what to evaluate and how to assess. By examining the syllabus's content, the instructor determined that the teacher employed the topical syllabus under the types of syllabuses present in contemporary English as second language courses and resources. The materials began with the target language that the pupils



would be learning. Next, the resources are categorized according to themes or subjects, such as greetings, colours, and numerals. The syllabus begins with the expected level of proficiency for the pupils. Next, the fundamental competency elaborates on the four linguistic abilities that should be stressed. Finally, the learning activities describe the learning experiences. After Taba's model of curriculum procedures, the syllabus outlines the criteria for evaluating the teaching materials in written and oral tests.

The syllabus outlined the learning objectives, which were further detailed in the indicators, outlining the skills and information that students should possess. Additionally, the curriculum specified time allocation and learning resources. It is distinct from the previous school's syllabus. Teachers created the program in response to the kids' needs. English was introduced as a local subject in schools during the last several years as part of the 2006 curriculum rollout. English is taught as an extra-curricular subject in elementary schools in Indonesia beginning in 2017/2018 when the 2013 curriculum was appropriately implemented. Its purpose is to assist pupils in learning English at school. The school was granted the ability to build its curriculum for teaching English. The faculty at this school created a curriculum for discussion classes called the English Conversation Club Program.

Since English is offered as an extra-curricular activity at the school, not all students study the language. Students may elect to participate in additional extra-curricular activities. Only grades 4 through 6 are eligible to participate in the English program. Curriculum planners follow a systematic procedure in typical curriculum processes, beginning with a needs assessment, setting goals and objectives, and finally specifying the program's instructional content. The proposal defined the program's aims and objectives in broad terms but was not explicitly articulated in the learning materials.

ENGLISH CONVERSATION CLUB PROGRAM FIRST SEMESTER  
2017 - 2018  
SDN 243 CICABE - MANDALAJATI - BANDUNG

CLASS : 4TH																					
No.	Learning Activities	August		September					Oktober				November				December			Information	
		1	2	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3		4
1	INTRODUCTION	19																			
2	AT CLASS		26																		
3	AT HOME			2																	
4	BASIC OF SENTENCES				9																
5	TALK ABOUT OUR ACTIVITY					16															
6	NOUN						23														
7	TEST							30													
8	FAVORITE FOODS								7												
9	FAVORITE DRINKS									14											
10	EXPRESS LIKES AND DISLIKE										21										
11	EXPRESS LIKES AND DISLIKE											28									
12	ASK FOR AN OFFER HELPS AND SAY THANK												4								
13	ASK FOR AN OFFER HELPS AND SAY THANK													11							
14	TEST														18						

MENGETAHUI  
KEPALA SEKOLAH SDN 243 CICABE

HJ. SUSI SUSILAWATI, M.M.Pd  
NIP : 196410051988032006

BANDUNG, AGUSTUS 2017  
GURU EKSKUL ECC

ASEP RAHMAT  
NIP . 198412062014111001

*Figure 5. English Syllabus (Sample)*

The syllabus design process involves the selection and sequencing of educational materials. Then, before delivering the content to the students, the teachers transformed the syllabus into a lesson plan. The lesson plan will direct teachers in providing the resources during the teaching procedure.

### 1.2 Process

According to a questionnaire administered to four instructors at four separate schools, teachers utilized various activities in their courses. Unsurprisingly, repeating the teacher's pronunciation is the most often performed task by all teachers in elementary schools. In each of the four schools examined, instructors



always included this practice in their lessons. According to them, this is because they believe it is critical to provide role models for children. Teachers must possess adequate, if not superior, pronunciation skills for students to copy the correct pronunciation.

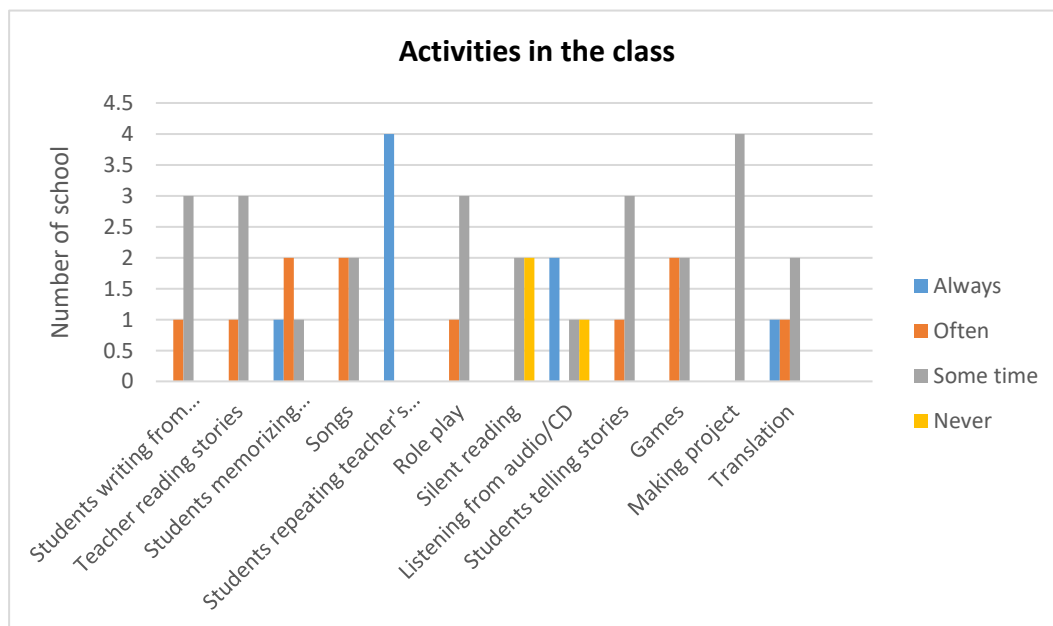


Figure 6. Class Activities (Frequency)

Additionally, teachers frequently engaged students in writing tasks, including sentence completion. Numerous 'conventional' activities, such as reading aloud, grammar exercises, and spelling exercises, were also popular. However, 'creative' activities, including games and songs, were often utilized in some schools. Surprisingly, even in the information and technology era, a school still did not allow students to utilize technology such as video/TV viewing or computer use. Instead, it emphasized that teachers must leverage technology to provide students with various learning opportunities.

In each lesson, all teachers employed the exercise of imitating the teacher's pronunciation. This contradicts the previous researcher's (Garton, 2011) conclusion, that the majority of teachers worldwide employed a tape recorder or CD to provide a native speaker model. The popularity of listening to the CD or tape may be because many instructors have expressed a lack of confidence in their own usage of English and hence prefer to offer pupils with a native speaker model via a recording.

Table 1. Activities conducted by the majority of teachers

Class Activities	Percentage
Repeating pronunciation	100%
Completing sentences	50%
Reading aloud	50%
Writing activities	50%
Memorizing words	50%
Spelling exercise	50%
Grammar exercise	50%
Games	50%
Songs	50%

Silent reading and poetry were also mentioned as pastimes used little or never. Most teachers never assigned activities requiring students to create or recite poetry or even conduct quiet reading in the classroom. Teachers reading tales to students and kids recounting stories were activities that rarely occurred in the school. It suggested that literature-related activities were not popular among elementary school students.



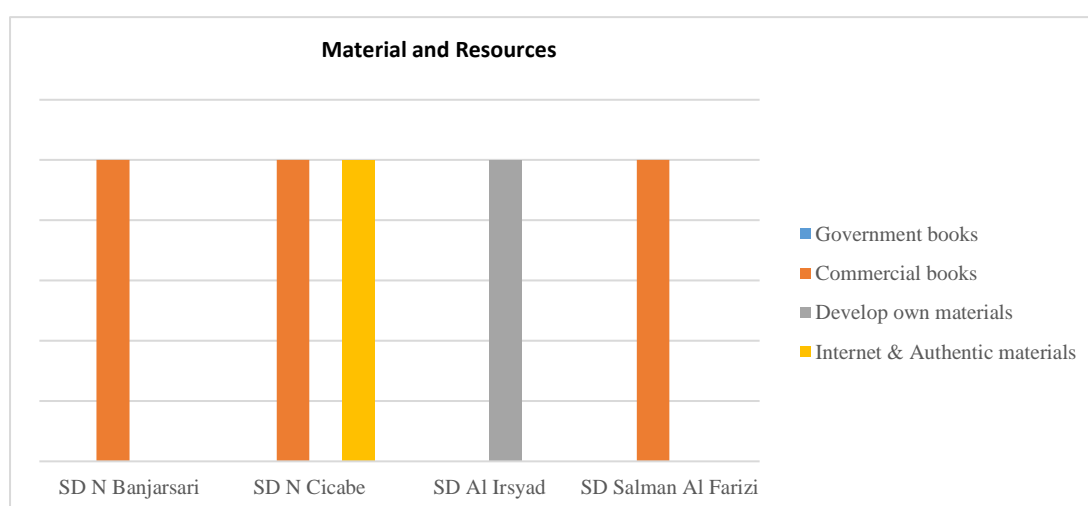
*Table 2. Activities rarely conducted by the majority of teachers*

Class Activities	Percentage
Poetry	100%
Silent reading	50%
Playing with computer	50%
Listening to audio	50%
Watching video	50%

Creativity on the part of teachers will increase students' learning experiences. A creative teacher will use various instructional methods to ensure students have diverse learning experiences through multiple learning assignments and activities.

### **1.3 Materials and Resources**

Teachers might develop their materials or use materials from other sources. Schools and teachers can choose from a wide range of accessible materials. The textbook may not be the only thing missing in primary classrooms. Teachers can promote the usage of authentic materials like video and software. The researchers noted that Bandung's primary schools used texts and teaching materials differently.



*Figure 7. Class activities (frequency)*

As shown, each school used a unique mix of materials and resources. Grafindo Media Pratama's Learning by Doing was the first public school teacher's text. The teacher used this textbook to introduce vocabulary, perform exercises, and add learning activities through the teaching-learning process. Being a non-compulsory subject, the government or ministry of education did not develop a textbook or teaching materials for instructors. However, primary school teachers' lesson plans and instructional materials are readily available. On the other hand, teachers must select English textbooks that meet their students' needs. The second public school instructor used more texts and supplies. Aside from textbooks, teachers gathered online and authentic materials, such as YouTube videos. These materials enhanced student engagement and excitement for the school's English curriculum.

Private schools regularly created or used commercial textbooks. Private schools were the first to create their curriculum. They have worked with Kidzlabs, a Bandung English school. Kidzlabs sells curricula, books, and software. They give students software and a workbook. Kidzlabs trained instructors and managed the teaching-learning process. Teachers are relieved of devising curriculum, selecting teaching materials, and assessing the educational process. They need just follow Kidzlabs' instructions while using the software. In contrast, the second private school employed commercial textbooks and instructional tools. For example, teachers used the Cambridge English textbook to help students achieve





their learning objectives. This was done using a teacher's book, a student's book, a kid's box and an activity book

### 1.4 Assessment

As illustrated in the figure, private schools did not administer the summative test. Instead, they were solely responsible for formative and authentic assessments. The assessments were administered following the completion of one lesson topic. In a private school, assessments were conducted by providing students with a worksheets bundle. Students were forced to complete their worksheets while using the software in class, and the teacher then verified and evaluated the worksheets after the semester. Only public schools administered summative tests in the four schools considered.

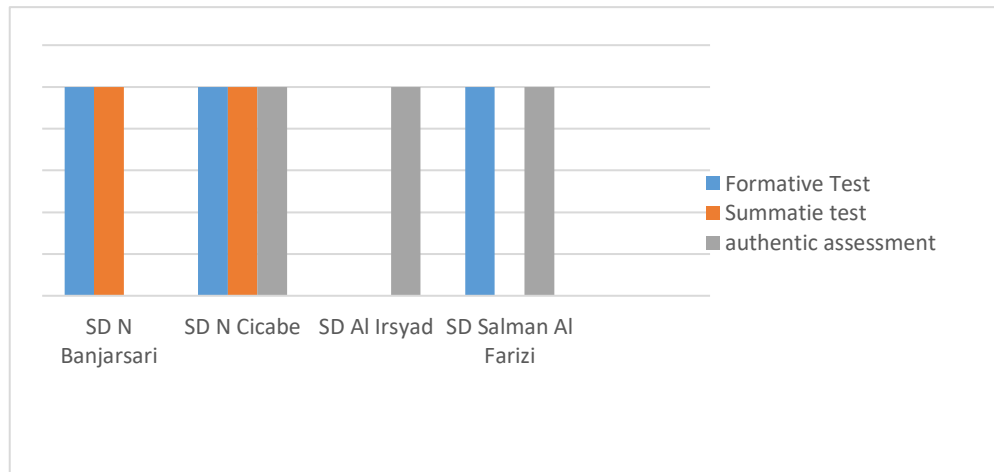


Figure 8. Evaluation model at primary schools

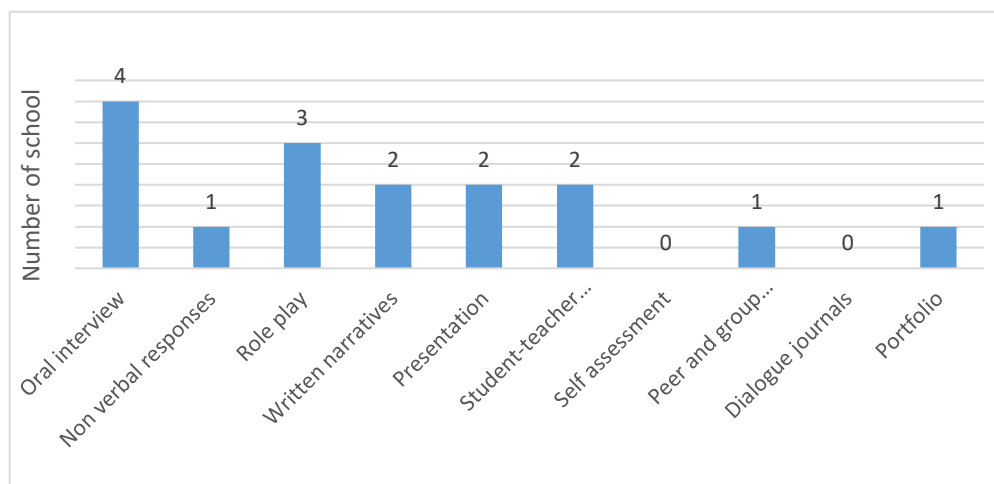


Figure 9. Assessment techniques used in the classroom

Additionally, one public school offered solely formative and summative tests in the 'conventional' manner. Teachers placed a greater emphasis on reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary than on listening and speaking. It is in contrast to how assessment is conducted in private schools, where teachers place a premium on authentic evaluation in formative assessment. Teachers used a variety of assessment strategies. Each institution utilized a unique assessment technique in the classroom. Further, the classroom evaluation procedures demonstrate to young learners that they are making progress in their linguistic development, enhancing motivation. This motivates students to accomplish more and teachers to focus on the process of learning rather than the outcome of learning.

## **2. Issues in the Implementation of Teaching English to Young Learners**

### **2.1 Government Policy**

Among the challenges noted by teachers in the study, government policies and big class numbers were primarily cited as issues in public schools. Meanwhile, insufficient instructional material and classroom displays that foster an English teaching atmosphere have been identified as a concern in both private and public institutions. From the four interviews, it is clear that public school instructors have the same challenge of implementing English instruction in the classroom following the government's policy.

English was taught as a local subject when the 2006 curriculum was established and implemented in primary schools. Numerous elementary schools in Indonesia, particularly in the larger cities, provided English classes despite having minimal personnel resources and facilities. Simultaneously, the government created resources for English instruction in elementary schools, including instructors, curriculum, and teaching English to young learners. As a result, the government employed and educated English instructors in elementary schools.

While schools were developing instruments for teaching English in elementary schools, the government launched the 2013 curriculum. English was not a subject matter in the new curriculum framework as a component of local content, as it was in the old curriculum. Instead, English might be taught in schools as an extra-curricular activity. This circumstance necessitated that school policymakers determine whether or not to teach English in schools.

The government's approach to English education in primary schools has resulted in a disparity in how English is taught in primary schools. English instruction in elementary schools has decreased in terms of the number of pupils who learned the language compared to the preparatory curriculum in which English was taught as a local content. When English was introduced as an extra-curricular activity, not all students in all grades participated in the school's English program. This issue complicates the task of English teachers in elementary schools of introducing English to young learners. They must devise ways for acclimating elementary school kids to English terms and situations (Johnstone, 2018; Diyanti & Madya, 2021). Typically, schools provide a variety of extra-curricular activities. However, students may select just one extra-curricular activity, and not all students may pick the English program. This implies that not all pupils study English at school, even if the school offers an extra-curricular program.

### **2.2 Language Setting and Exposure**

English language environments and exposure appeared low in the four elementary schools investigated. The kids were not exposed to a supportive English language environment. They were provided adequate opportunities to utilize the language both inside and outside the classroom and throughout the school.. Using the translation technique, *Bahasa Indonesia* was utilized freely in all four schools' English language courses. Indeed, most English teachers conducted lessons in *Bahasa Indonesia* as the instructional language. English instructors in private schools were more likely to utilize English as an instructional language than English teachers in public schools.

English teachers cited two primary justifications for this approach. First, due to an absence of certified English instructors, non-trained English teachers were assigned to teach English in elementary schools. Further, it appeared that some English teachers lacked both language competency and pedagogical understanding necessary to teach the language. Some stated that they lacked of confidence in their linguistic abilities. Indeed, qualified English teachers indicated that they lacked the knowledge and confidence to communicate effectively in English. The second reason was that instructors believed that their students would not comprehend English because the use of translation technique in the classroom. The untrained English instructors had the same pedagogical ideas as the trained English teachers.



As the study noticed, teachers' language in the classroom positively influences students' learning, mainly if English language classes are the sole opportunity for pupils to listen to the language. Although Sert (2019) argued that the teacher's speech is critical to language teaching, using the first language for classroom management and instructions deprived students of authentic examples of language use and established a tone for the class. This may influence much of what occurs during second language activities (Burns, 2016). Further, the entire setting produces language, from the patterns of interaction between the teacher and the class to the actual gestures utilized. The input that children get extends well beyond the phrases they encounter (Ellis, 2019). This scenario made it difficult for English teachers to provide pupils with as many English surroundings and exposure as possible.

Several strategies for providing an English-language environment and exposure at school include class and school displays, hosting native speakers, and video conferencing. Unfortunately, the researchers discovered a shortage of English environments and exposure at the four schools they examined. We discovered just a few English visual aids in and around the classroom and around the school surroundings. Further, during the monitoring period, we discovered visual aids in English at only two schools: one public and one private. In addition, the researchers found that the other two schools lacked any English visual aids. Therefore, it is also becoming a problem for English teachers in elementary schools to include more English visual aids to familiarize children with English situations.

## Conclusion

English's status as an extracurricular subject affected its deployment in primary schools. It affects the number of schools that offer English as a second language and the standing of English in schools. Due to the lack of governmental direction for the English teaching curriculum in elementary schools, the implementation of TEYL varied from school to school. The academics developed the syllabus in response to the students' needs. Further, each school's teachers were required to adhere to a separate curriculum. Some teachers adapted the syllabus from a preparatory curriculum, while others created their own, yet others adapted it from an English school/course. Government policy is the greatest significant impediment to establishing English language teaching for young learners. English education in Indonesian primary schools, particularly in public institutions, has been affected by its inclusion as an extracurricular subject in the national primary school curriculum.

Due to Indonesia's English language environment and exposure, teaching English as a second or foreign language has become challenging. Since English was not regularly used at home, school, community, or in public spaces, English teachers must foster an environment favorable to English learning. English teachers in primary schools are finding it increasingly difficult to promote an English environment and exposure through events such as English day, spelling bee competitions, and speech competitions. As a result, it has developed into a safe space for children to study English.

Before beginning their careers as English instructors in primary schools, they need receive TEYL teacher training. Teachers' pre-service and in-service education for educating young learners has increased dramatically. Additionally, an English Instructors for Young Learners Community (ETYLC) should be developed to facilitate the exchange of ideas and experiences among English teachers in primary schools. The high level of interest in this study demonstrated by a large number of English teachers in the region and the similarities in their activities and concerns indicate a need for additional opportunities for sharing ideas and experiences among primary school English teachers locally, nationally, and internationally. Additionally, primary school English teachers must provide an English environment and exposure. English visual aids in and around the classroom, English day, English competition, video conference, bringing native speakers to the school, and sister school program all serve as examples of the English environment and exposure at school.



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