

**DO ENGLISH TEACHERS IN BANDUNG UNDERSTAND EFFECTIVE
ENGLISH TEACHING?**
**(A Survey of Early Childhood and Primary School Teachers' Understanding
of Effective English Teaching in Bandung)**

Maryam Nibrosurrahman¹, Bachrudin Musthafa², Leli Kurniawati³

^{1,2,3} Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia

Email : 1maryamnib11@upi.edu, 2dinmusthafa@upi.edu , 3leli.kurniawati@upi.edu

ABSTRACT

There has been a misconception that teaching English at the primary level does not require the same English language skills as at higher levels. In addition, due to the lack of professional support such as in-service training, teacher preparedness at the primary level is very limited. In fact, effective English language teaching is needed to ensure successful learning. This study is a survey-research that aims to determine the level of understanding of early grade preschool and primary school teachers in conducting effective English language teaching. The respondents were early grade preschool and primary school teachers in Bandung City. The quota sampling technique was used to select respondents based on predetermined criteria, namely: 1) Have taught English for at least 1 year; 2) English learning is part of the school curriculum, and; 3) Provide English learning at least once a week. In this study, 30 respondents were determined. The data collection process was conducted through a questionnaire using google form. The results showed that the level of understanding of early grade preschool and primary school teachers in Bandung City was in the 'understanding enough' category with a percentage of 73.7%. The results also show that early grade preschool and primary school teachers feel it is very important to be equipped with systematic job training, so that English teaching can be done effectively

Keywords: English Teaching, ECE, Early Primary School

ABSTRAK

Selama ini, terjadi miskonsepsi bahwa pengajaran Bahasa Inggris di tingkat dasar tidak memerlukan kemampuan bahasa Inggris yang sama dengan tingkat yang lebih tinggi. Selain itu, karena kurangnya dukungan profesional seperti pelatihan dalam jabatan, kesiapan guru di tingkat dasar sangat terbatas. Padahal, diperlukan pengajaran Bahasa Inggris yang efektif untuk menjamin keberhasilan pembelajaran. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian survei yang bertujuan untuk mengetahui tingkat pemahaman guru PAUD dan SD kelas awal dalam melakukan pengajaran Bahasa Inggris yang efektif. Responden penelitian merupakan guru PAUD dan SD kelas awal di Kota Bandung. Teknik quota sampling digunakan untuk memilih responden berdasarkan kriteria yang telah ditentukan, yakni: 1) Telah mengajar Bahasa Inggris minimal 1 tahun; 2) Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris merupakan bagian dari kurikulum sekolah, dan; 3) Memberikan pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris minimal satu kali dalam 1 minggu. Dalam penelitian ini, ditentukan responden sebanyak 30 orang. Proses pengambilan data dilakukan melalui kuesioner dengan menggunakan google form. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tingkat pemahaman guru PAUD dan SD kelas awal di Kota Bandung berada pada

kategori 'cukup memahami' dengan presentase 73,7%. Hasil penelitian juga menunjukkan bahwa para guru PAUD dan SD kelas awal merasa sangat penting untuk dilengkapi dengan pelatihan jabatan yang sistematis, agar pengajaran Bahasa Inggris dapat dilakukan dengan efektif.

Kata Kunci: Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris, PAUD, SD Kelas Awal

A. INTRODUCTION

English learning in Indonesia takes a very important role in the education system as English is an international language that is widely used in various fields such as science, technology, business, and diplomacy (Alkarima, 2019). Due to the widespread interaction between countries and the importance of English as a second language for many people, Indonesia has adopted various strategies and approaches to improve the English proficiency of students and the wider community. One of them is indicated by the existence of English subjects that are updated from the primary level to the university level (Maduwu, 2016). However, in its implementation, the teaching of English in Indonesia faces the challenges of various educational policies, ideologies, socio-cultural and religious beliefs (Zein et al., 2020).

The teaching of English in Indonesia, especially to early grade students, has also been controversial due to its focus on unclear grammar rules and the possibility of poor communication development (Zein et

al., 2020). In addition, the readiness of English teachers in Indonesia is still quite limited. As the results of (Mutiah et al., 2020) research show, the readiness of students to learn English in Indonesia is actually high, but the facilities and training of English teachers are very limited, which unconsciously affects the readiness of teachers to teach English, especially at the kindergarten and primary school levels. Teachers of English in the early grades lack professional support and opportunities for in-service training. This is because there is a misconception that teaching English to primary school children does not require the same English language skills as at higher levels (Musthafa, 2010; Wijayanti, 2016). In fact, Freeman (2017) argues that professional English language teaching requires a specialized language 'for teaching', or what he calls 'English for teaching'.

The teacher's ability to conduct English teaching is the main key in the learning process, and the teacher has a very important role in developing

students' potential and understanding of the objects studied in a specific historical and cultural context. (Freeman, 2017) explains that effective teaching is needed, that is, the teacher's ability to deliver the subject matter using certain methods that connect classroom learning with the outside world in the teaching process. Bogomolova et al. (2018) add that the teacher's teaching ability ensures the successful transfer of knowledge to students for a diverse and multi-level understanding of knowledge and skills.

In English teaching itself, (Musthafa, 2010) explains that in order to provide effective English language teaching to young learners or early elementary school students, teachers must at least meet the requirements of five pillars. Among them are understanding the nature of children, knowing how children learn, knowing how children learn languages, knowing how Indonesian children learn English, and knowing and being able to provide facilities for children learning English as a foreign language in Indonesia. These pillars of requirements are very important to consider because they have never been publicly articulated in academic

discourse in Indonesia. Effective English language learning also requires innovation through the use of diverse learning strategies and the use of media to construct students' knowledge (Maru'ao, 2020). Freeman (2017) also added that the definition of a professional English teacher is a teacher who knows the purpose of his or her teaching, and understands the goals and uses of English to be achieved in his or her classroom.

Research related to the readiness of teaching English to early grade students in Indonesia has been conducted by Mutiah et al. (2020), by exploring the readiness of teachers, students, and schools with the specification of research sites in Jakarta, Bandung, Bali, Lampung, Sulawesi, and Kalimantan. In addition, teacher readiness is also examined from the aspect of teacher competence and the intrinsic aspect of the teacher, namely emotional attitude readiness. According to the results of the research, the intrinsic aspects of teachers, namely emotional readiness, such as teachers' lack of confidence in using English, affect the correctness of students' English pronunciation. This is because students will tend to make teachers as

role models in speaking English. According to him, teachers' willingness to teach English in Indonesia is very high, but there are still obstacles or difficulties in practice.

This study will contribute to enrich the data related to teachers' readiness to conduct effective English teaching by focusing on the level of teachers' understanding based on the 5 pillars of effective English teaching requirements according to Musthafa (2010). With this research, it is expected to provide concrete recommendations for the improvement of English language teaching in Indonesia, especially at the kindergarten and early elementary levels. This research is also expected to reveal the professional development needs of English teachers by identifying the areas where teachers' understanding and skills need to be improved.

B. Method

This research is a survey-research. Creswell (2012) explains that survey research is a procedure in quantitative research in which researchers conduct surveys of samples or entire populations to describe attitudes, opinions,

behaviors, or characteristics of the population. Unlike experimental research, this research only describes trends in the data rather than providing rigorous explanations. The data collection technique used was a questionnaire in the form of a Google form.

The source of research data was taken from the population of teachers who teach English in early childhood and early elementary schools in Bandung City. In this study, researchers used quota sampling technique in sampling the research. Quota sampling technique is a non-random sampling technique in which respondents are selected based on predetermined characteristics so that the total sample has the same characteristic distribution as the broader population (Firmansyah et al., 2022). The number of respondents in this study was determined to be 30 English teachers in early childhood education and primary schools with the following criteria: (1) having taught English for at least 1 year; (2) English learning is part of the curriculum in the school where they teach; and (3) they provide English learning at least once a week.

In addition, after the data were collected, the data were analyzed using central tendency and percentage techniques. The central tendency technique helps researchers to find the center of the data set, which reflects the general characteristics of the data. The percentage technique is used to determine the percentage that shows a certain category and expresses information about the level of understanding of early childhood and primary school teachers in conducting effective English language teaching. The number obtained from the percentage calculation is the level of proficiency of the teacher used as a respondent in the study.

Tabel 1. Instrument lattice

Indicator	Question Item Number	Number of Items
Understanding the nature of children	1,2,3	3
Understanding how children learn	4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18	15
Understanding how children learn language	19,20,21	3
Understanding how Indonesian children learn English	22,23,24,25	4
Understand and be able to provide facilities for children learning English as a foreign language in Indonesia	26,27,28,29,30	5
Total		30

C.Result and Discussion

Result

The distribution of respondents who took part in the survey of teachers' level of understanding of effective English language teaching for early grade preschool and primary school students in Bandung City is illustrated in the table below.

Table 2. Survey Respondent Data

Categories	Jumlah	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	27	90,0
Male	3	10,0
Age		
20-27 years	15	50,0
27-35 years	10	33,3
>35 years old	5	16,7
Educational Background		
High School	3	10,0
S1	4	13,0
PGPAUD/PGSD		
S1 English	5	17,0
Education		
S1 Other Majors	16	53,0
S2	2	7,0
Teaching Experience		
1-7 Years	13	43,0
3-4 Years	9	30,0
>5 Years	8	27,0
Grade Tached		
Preschool	11	37,0
1st grade	7	23,0
primary school		
2nd grade	7	23,0
primary school		
3rd grade	5	17,0
primary school		

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the survey was dominated by female teachers, as many as 27 people (90%), while there were only 3 male teachers (10%). The

age of the respondents is half followed by the age of 20-27 years, which is as many as 15 people (50%), followed by the age of 27-35 years 10 people (33%) and the age above 35 years as many as 5 people (16.7%). The last education of the teachers is dominated by Bachelor (S1) other than PGPAUD/PGSD and English Education majors, consisting of 16 people (53%). In addition, the teaching experience of teachers is mostly followed by teachers who have just taught for 1-7 years, as many as 13 people (43%). Meanwhile, based on the level taught, it is dominated by teachers who teach in early grade elementary schools, as many as 18 people (60%).

Furthermore, the following is the score of teachers' level of understanding of each pillar of effective English teaching requirements.

Table 3. Teacher Understanding Level Score Pillar of Understanding the Nature of Children

Statement Item	Level of Understanding (%)	Category
Children are individuals that differ from adults	92,5	Understood
Children have a different culture from adults	67,5	Understand enough
Children are not treated and valued in the	63,4	Understand enough

same way as adults.

Jumlah (Average)	74,4	Understand enough
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Source: Primary Data, 2024

Based on table 3, it is known that teachers have a good understanding of the nature of children, especially regarding the characteristics of children who are different from adults, with a score of 92.5%. This means that teachers already understand this. In terms of understanding that children have a different culture from adults, teachers understand it quite well. This is indicated by the score of the teacher's level of understanding which reached 67.5%, but seemed far from the categorization of understanding. Therefore, this statement also has implications for the statement that children are not treated and valued in the same way as adults, which only shows a score of 63.4%. This means that teachers only moderately understand this.

Table 4. Teacher Understanding Level Score Pillar of Understanding How Children Learn

Statement Item	Level of Understanding (%)	Category
Children learn from abstractions that are contextualized	71,7	Understand enough
Children learn from what they	87,5	Understood

catch through their senses		
Children learn by experiencing it directly	66,7	Understand enough
Teaching things around the child's life is more important than teaching things that are far from their environment.	75,0	Understand enough
Children cannot learn from abstract virtual experiences	65,8	Understand enough
Learning is better when it goes beyond sitting in a chair	82,5	Understood
Effective learning does not have to be done by creating teaching scenarios and making learning media	57,5	Not yet understood
Learning must have a tangible purpose	90	Already Understood
Children's thinking is embedded in the context of here and now situations	70,8	Understand enough
Effective teaching is based on what the child already knows, not what the child has just learned.	62,5	Not yet understood
Children will build knowledge through what they already know.	75,0	Understand enough
Effective teaching is teaching that relies on concepts that children do not have, not those that are limited to vocabulary	71,6	Understand enough

Children have short attention spans	70,0	Understand enough
A child's attention span has major implications for teaching procedures	70,0	Understand enough
Teachers should use a variety of teaching techniques for short periods of time with detailed materials	71,7	Understand enough
Total (Average)	72,6	Understand enough

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Based on Table 4, the pillars of understanding how children learn, it is known that teachers have sufficient understanding of this with an average score of 72.6%. The highest understanding of teachers is related to learning that must have real goals, where the understanding score reaches 90%, followed by understanding that children learn from what they capture through their senses at 87.5%. However, there are 2 items that teachers do not understand, namely related to effective learning that does not have to be done by making teaching scenarios and making learning media, and learning must be based on what children already know, not what children just know. Furthermore, teachers have a good understanding

of the items related to how children learn.

Table 5. Teacher Understanding Level Score Pillar of Understanding How Children Learn Language		
Statement Item	Level of Understanding (%)	Category
Children can learn English through their surroundings	86,7	Understood
Children need to be placed in an environment where English is used for communicative purposes.	72,5	Understand enough
In the learning process, teachers need to recognize that English is a prestigious language for children to master.	65,8	Understand enough
Total (Average)	75,0	Understand enough

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Based on Table 5, the pillar of understanding how children learn language, teachers have understood it well enough with an average score of 75%. The highest score is shown in the item children can learn English through their surrounding environment at 86.7%. The other items show the category that teachers have sufficient understanding of the aspects of the pillar.

Table 6. Scores of Teachers' Understanding Level Pillar of Understanding How Indonesian Children Learn English		
Statement Item	Level of Understanding (%)	Category
English must have a function in social interactions	79,1	Understood enough
English learning should not be confined to the classroom or during class hours.	83,3	Understood
English cannot be taught at will, because there are systematic rules	60,0	Not yet understood
It is important for English teachers to be equipped with systematic in-service training	85,8	Understood
Total (Average)	77,0	Understand enough

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Table 6, which is related to the pillar of understanding how Indonesian children learn English, shows that teachers have understood it quite well. This is shown by the average score which reached 77%. The highest score related to learning is shown by the item of English learning that is not only stuck in the classroom, at 83.3%. However, there is 1 item whose score only reaches 60%, where teachers do not understand that English learning cannot be taught at will, because there are systematic rules in it. Therefore, 85.8% of teachers agreed that it is important to have systematic job

training so that English teaching can run effectively and appropriately.

Tabel 7. Teacher Understanding Level Score
Pilar understands and provides facilities for children who are learning English as a foreign language in Indonesia

Statement Item	Level of Understanding (%)	Category
Teachers need to use English during the lesson	77,5	Understand enough
Teachers should try to use English as much as possible during the lesson so as not to make it difficult for the children.	68,3	Understand enough
Effective English language teaching should be supported by a classroom environment rich in English print media.	79,1	Understand enough
In the learning process, teachers focus on functional English learning	69,1	Understand enough
In the English learning process, teachers should use activity-based teaching and learning techniques.	72,5	Understand enough
Total (Average)	73,3	Understand enough

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Finally, Table 7 shows that teachers have a good understanding of and are able to provide facilities for children who are learning English as a foreign language in Indonesia.

Moreover, the teacher understands that effective teaching should be supported by a classroom environment rich in English print media. Teachers also understand that they need to use English during the lesson. However, it still needs to be emphasized that in the learning process, teachers should focus on functional English learning, and should use English as much as possible during the learning process. Because, the comprehension score only reached 69%.

Discussion

Based on the survey results, early childhood and primary school teachers in Bandung City have a good understanding of effective English language teaching as shown by the average score of 73.7%. This is based on the 5 pillars of effective English teaching requirements, which consist of Understanding the nature of children; Knowing how children learn; Knowing how children learn language; Knowing how Indonesian children learn English; and Knowing and being able to provide facilities for children learning English as a foreign language in Indonesia (Musthafa, 2010).

In addition, in some aspects, teachers already have a good understanding. Such as the characteristics of children who are different from adults, learning that must be activity-based and have real goals, and environmental factors that affect the learning process. Harun (2014) explains that in teaching English, teachers need to understand the theory of early childhood development and language development. Adequate and educational play facilities can also make children learn well. In addition, by understanding the character and characteristics of children owned by teachers can also encourage teachers to be creative so that the learning process becomes more appropriate and effective (Mazhabi, 2019). On the other hand, adequate and educational play facilities are essential to support the learning process. According to Mazhabi (2019), a good understanding of children's characteristics encourages teachers to be more creative in developing teaching strategies. Teachers who have this understanding can create a learning atmosphere that is fun and relevant to children's daily

experiences, which in turn makes learning more effective.

However, it seems that some aspects of understanding still need to be emphasized in order to make English teaching more effective. This is because the responses from the teachers were dominated by the category 'quite understand', compared to 'already understand'. In fact, in some aspects, teachers still do not have a good understanding, including the understanding that effective teaching is teaching based on what children already know, not what children just know. The results of research by Septiara et al., (2022) showed that materials taught about daily events such as time, seasons, and objects at school and at home would make students happier to learn and motivated. This context-based teaching is more relevant to children, as it helps them connect the material taught to their personal experiences. Teachers who understand the importance of this approach will be better able to make children feel comfortable and confident in learning English (Musthafa, 2010).

Effective teaching also does not have to be done by creating teaching scenarios and making

learning media, because children can learn through their surrounding environment (Musthafa, 2010). However, teachers only understand it to the extent of 57.5%. Teachers also do not understand that English learning cannot be taught in a random way because there are basically systematic rules in the learning process. This is also supported by another statement, where 85.8% of teachers agreed that it is important to have systematic training for English teachers. This indicates that teachers are aware that they need more in-depth and ongoing training to teach English more effectively. Although most teachers already have sufficient understanding, this training is needed to refine their ability to deliver English materials systematically and according to children's developmental stages (Yamin, 2017). Systematic teacher training is also needed to help teachers overcome difficulties in delivering materials tailored to children's needs. In this training, teachers can learn about more innovative approaches to foreign language teaching and how to integrate technology into the learning process (Marhamah, 2018). With structured and sustained training,

teachers will be better prepared to face the challenges of teaching English in schools, especially at the early childhood and primary school levels.

According to Yamin (2017), English is a foreign language that is difficult for most Indonesian children to learn because the structure of English is contrary to Indonesian. Therefore, when children start learning English from scratch, they should study with experienced and competent teachers in order to learn it better. This limited understanding of flexibility in teaching shows that some teachers are not optimal in utilizing the environment as a learning resource. It is important to improve this so that teachers can be more flexible in creating a natural and less rigid learning atmosphere.

E. Conclusion

The level of understanding of early grade preschool and primary school teachers in Bandung City in relation to effective English language teaching falls into the "understand enough" category, with an average total score of 73.7%. However, it seems that there is still a need for more emphasis on the aspects of understanding English itself, and the

appropriate learning strategies for early grade preschool and primary school children. This is because teachers' understanding is still dominated by the 'understand enough' category compared to the 'understood' category. In fact, the average of each pillar of the new requirements is classified into the 'understand enough' category with a score that is still quite far from entering the 'understood' category. Therefore, it is important to conduct systematic in-service training for English teachers, especially for English teachers in early childhood and early grade elementary schools. However, this study also shows that there is still room for improvement, especially in terms of the utilization of technology in teaching, innovation in learning strategies, and adjusting to the needs of students in the digital era.

This study is still very limited, so the researcher suggests conducting further research by considering teachers' educational background and teaching experience. The researcher also suggests narrowing the focus of the research, by separating the research on early childhood teachers and early grade elementary teachers.

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