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## ADVANTAGES AND DIFFICULTIES OF TEACHING ENGLISH IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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### ABSTRACT

The readiness of the schools and the proficiency levels of the students are related to the teaching of English in primary schools. The schools will be prepared to teach English if they have an adequate number of English teachers, media, and textbooks. This is because students in primary schools typically range in age from 6 to 12 years old, and this is thought to be the optimal time for learning. It is consistent with the fundamental idea that younger students learn English more effectively. Primary English instruction has advantages as well as difficulties. This article addresses the problem by outlining its advantages and disadvantages in light of theories and research findings. It then suggests some workarounds for these issues, which can serve as guidelines for educational institutions offering top-notch English instruction.

### KEYWORDS

Advantages, difficulties, and solutions of teaching English in elementary schools.

### INTRODUCTION

Pupils between the ages of six and twelve, who are considered young learners, are taught English in primary schools [1]. They will arrive at the class with

varying degrees of English proficiency because they are still young. They might speak English quite well, while the others might not know any language at all.

There is a difference in the motivation of students to learn English due to this condition. While some of them believe that learning English is simple and enjoyable, others believe it is challenging and tiresome [2]. Additionally, it is important to support and encourage students who are not interested in learning English by demonstrating that it is an exciting and enjoyable language, while also providing them with an appropriate English lesson. As a result, schools that have the necessary resources—like media, English-language books, and qualified teachers—can help students learn the language and support them effectively. There must be numerous difficulties involved in teaching English in elementary schools. For young learners, learning English can be both beneficial and detrimental [6]. If the activities are engaging and relevant to the lives of the young learners, then it might be advantageous. Additionally, it will encourage them to pick up English. However, if the exercises are not enjoyable and relevant to the lives of the young learners, they may even be harmful. They will therefore detest learning English as a result.

### The main results and findings

Numerous studies on the subject of teaching English in primary schools have been carried out in support of that claim. These include textbooks, English teachers, parents' awareness, the social standing and interests of the students, and so forth [7, 8]. It is evident from these phenomena that teaching English in primary

schools presents a number of difficulties and challenges [7,8,9]. As a result, offering the solutions can assist the educational institutions in resolving any issues that may arise during the actual implementation of the English teaching-learning process. The answers can be found by providing English teachers with training, informing parents of the importance of English, inspiring students with engaging lesson plans, and other similar initiatives.

In addition to local and national languages, English is now taught as a foreign language in Indonesian schools [1]. It is only regarded as a local content subject, though, according to [2], so schools are free to decide whether or not to teach English depending on their unique needs and geographical circumstances. English was not taught in primary schools in the past, but it is now deemed necessary for a number of subjects, including science, technology, culture, and similar fields. As a result, the Indonesian government chooses to incorporate English into the curriculum for elementary schools, which is referred to as the School-Based Curriculum [3].

Learning the language will be more difficult if it is acquired after the ideal time. Ages 2 to 14 are the ideal range [10]. It implies that learning English will present greater difficulties for adults or those over the age of 14. In a different source, students in most schools begin learning a foreign language between the ages of 8 and 9 [11]. They think that because it's the best time to learn

from the teacher, students will not fail to learn a foreign language during those years.

Additionally, "preschoolers' brains are more flexible, connected, and active than adults'." [12]. It indicates that kids have great social skills, enjoy playing and moving around, and are imaginative and creative. Therefore, if English teachers consider their students' needs and are able to recognize their backgrounds, including their environment, culture, and areas of interest, the teaching and learning of English in the classroom will be more successful.

There are other factors besides age that help young language learners pick up a language more quickly [13]. The success of introducing English in primary schools can also be influenced by other factors, such as social interaction, family background, learning strategies, learning materials and media, socioeconomic background, motivation, language ability, and quality of the teachers [4]. It appears that young learners will have difficulty learning English if they lack motivation to do so and if their aptitude is not supported at an early age. It also occurs in relation to the caliber of the instructors, learning methodologies, socioeconomic background, media and learning resources, social interactions, and family history. Success is impossible if they don't help them with their English language studies.

Teachers in elementary schools are expected to assess the advantages, difficulties, and potential solutions after identifying a number of factors that impact the effectiveness of English instruction. The method used to teach English in primary schools will be covered next. One important aspect of teaching English in primary schools is emphasised. The reason for this is that it deals with young students who have special needs. Young learners have a number of traits, including being egocentric, imaginative and active, self-centered, easily bored, and having trouble telling the difference between concrete and abstract concepts. They also have low levels of concentration, prefer to work alone, and enjoy learning new things [4,14,15]. When learning a new language, they pick it up by doing.

Primary school English instruction serves a number of functions. They fall into two main categories, like socialization and interaction [12]. The goals of interaction are to support children's acquisition and application of knowledge, such as learning how to spell; other physical skills, such as cutting and handwriting; and complex skills, such as reading. In the meantime, socialization serves to enable kids to interact and collaborate with their peers as well as to help them recognize the existence of a larger society. For instance, working in pairs, playing games, singing along to a song, and other similar activities can all be done during class.

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The present study's central hypothesis will be examined in the following discussion. It covers the advantages of teaching English in elementary schools as well as the difficulties and their resolutions. These concepts are compiled from multiple studies on English instruction in elementary schools.

Numerous studies have been done on the subject of English instruction in primary schools. Learning English in elementary school has a number of advantages, according to [10, 16, 18]. They all concur that teaching English in elementary schools will have more benefits than drawbacks. Benefits include increased awareness, fluency in language, confidence, and time. The advantages that the researchers have identified will be covered in more detail.

According to [16], teaching English in elementary schools can increase pupils' awareness of their native tongue. It's quite strange that, for instance, Indonesian students speak enough Indonesian but are proficient in English. As a result, in order for Indonesian students to learn English, they must possess the fundamental language of communication, which is Indonesian. This indicates that before students wish to learn English as a foreign language, the Indonesian language plays a very important role. However, teaching English in elementary schools also gives pupils the chance to develop more significant intercultural competence and global awareness [16, 18]. This implies that students will have more opportunities to comprehend the fact that different countries have different cultures as a result of learning English. Students who experience it develop a more positive outlook and become more tolerant and respectful [10, 16]. English, being an international language, is also thought to be one of the best means of communicating with people from various countries and understanding their cultures.

Because primary school students have more time to learn foreign language instruction [10], teaching English to them also helps them acquire better pronunciation and fluency [18]. If students practice pronouncing words correctly in English, they will become more fluent speakers.

Gaining confidence is an additional advantage. One of the most important things to inspire pupils to learn is



self-confidence. Their confidence may suffer if they struggle to understand the lesson. It is anticipated that one of the initiatives to increase their self-confidence may be learning English at a young age [19]. If they speak English well enough, they will feel more comfortable following the lesson and responding to the teacher's questions, for example.

Furthermore, given that learning at this age is natural, engaging, social, multisensory, active, experiential, memorable, and so on, children learn better than adults [18]. They will attain a high level of language proficiency when all of these ideal circumstances are met.

These results point to a number of advantages for English instruction in primary schools. According to these results, it is best for kids to comprehend that there are various languages used for communication in this world and that they can categorize languages as first, second, or foreign. They will become more conscious of both their native language and the foreign language they are learning if they know which ones are first, second, and foreign. They will also speak English with greater assurance. It's because they pronounce words more clearly and speak English more fluently than those who lack confidence in the language.

Since teaching adult learners differs from teaching children, teaching English in primary schools is not an easy task. It also faces numerous difficulties. [9][8][7].

There are issues with both external and internal factors. Identity, motivation, and pedagogy are all considered internal factors. Textbooks, educational materials, the English proficiency of the teachers, and class size are examples of external factors. We go over those difficulties below.

One of the primary challenges associated with internal factors is pedagogy competence, which pertains to the appropriate application of instructional strategies. In language teaching and learning, there are a number of novel learning approaches, including Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Learning and Teaching (CBLT), and others. For a number of reasons, teachers might find it difficult to introduce those strategies [9]. For instance, it might not be suitable for instructing sizable class sizes in environments with limited resources. As a result, [9] educators must work harder to apply those teaching techniques in a successful manner.

Children have diverse motivations, which makes it challenging to inspire them to learn the language [9]. While some of them might have trouble understanding English, others might not. Additionally, there is infrequent assessment of the students' progress. It poses a small issue because the assessment is necessary to determine the extent to which the students have understood the material. Because of this, people with low English proficiency are not motivated or even interested in learning if their

progress is not regularly evaluated. It's actually worse because the teacher will find it challenging to explain the material and include the students in activities if they lack motivation to learn English. However, parental support is also very important to the students [8]. Students will not be motivated to learn English if their parents do not support them in doing so.

Identity is a further source of difficulty. Teaching English to young students who have a global perspective while allowing them to retain their national identity is a difficult task. "A situation in which a mass of people makes the same identification with national symbols – have internalized the symbols of the nation" is what national identity is defined as [19]. It recognizes that each nation has a distinct national identity and that they are all unique from one another. It indicates that the students are patriotic because they can communicate in both local and Indonesian languages. It is difficult, though, to instill a sense of pride in students' national identities while they are learning English. The second challenge is a result of external factors, specifically textbooks. Some counties lack textbooks, which poses a problem because textbooks are essential for helping students learn English. In Indonesia, the government has mandated the use of textbooks, but it does not restrict the use of other resources that can aid teachers in delivering lessons. Nevertheless, the materials in the school's chosen textbooks were frequently disorganized and

lacking in illustrations [7]. It is also well-known that having the right resources available can help teachers prepare lessons to be used in teaching-learning activities. In this regard, the lesson plan or content from textbooks or other learning resources must be modified in accordance with the needs and abilities of the students. Children require specific explanations in the form of demonstrations, according to the source. It implies that they require something empirical in place of conjecture [9]. Media that can aid in their understanding of the lesson is necessary. But the majority of schools lack adequate instructional resources [8]. Lack of appropriate teaching resources, such as media, will make it difficult for teachers to plan enjoyable activities that get students moving.

Next, a teacher's ability to teach in English may have an impact. Put differently, individuals with low proficiency levels tend to be low on confidence, struggle to engage with kids, and absorb information slowly [9]. As a result, teachers who lack the necessary expertise to instruct English, particularly to younger students, should receive training that will enable them to advance their competencies. But the majority of the English teachers enrolled in the program expressed dissatisfaction. They are not proficient in the relevant method, which is one of the causes [7, 8]. When a teacher is not adequately assisted by the training to enhance their competencies, it creates an additional issue. These issues give rise to grave concerns

regarding the general caliber of English instruction in primary schools. As a result, giving English teachers in primary schools the right training will enable them to be prepared for a variety of student characteristics.

Then, it is thought that a common challenge is the size of the class. The teachers find more challenges and it is more difficult to implement learner-centered learning in larger classes. Otherwise, students will find it difficult to move around and won't have enough room to complete their tasks if the room is too small or inappropriate for the number of students [9].

These results indicate that there are numerous sources of difficulty. Therefore, in order to improve the quality of English instruction in primary schools, the government works with educators and the school committee to find solutions to these problems.

One possible solution is for primary school English teachers to receive some training from stakeholders who oversee the problem of teaching English to young learners. In addition, the training must be properly planned and organized, including by having a qualified instructor, relevant resources, and an appropriate methodology. The reason for this is that educators who work with younger students differ from those who work with adults. Primary school English teachers should meet certain requirements [4,20]. The listed qualifications are as follows: teachers must be multitalented, conduct assessments, manage their

English classes effectively, be patient, kind, friendly, humorous, and extremely energetic; they must be professional and eager to participate in skill-building activities like training sessions or workshops; and they must be able to communicate effectively with students, coworkers, parents, and other stakeholders.

Second, since the students are still young and require special attention from the teachers, the teachers must recognize the characteristics of the students in order to motivate them to learn English. A number of experts also describe the aspects of young learners [4,14,15]. Because different personalities require different approaches, teachers who are aware of their students' personalities can inspire their students to be enthusiastic about learning English. Teachers can, for instance, offer engaging and pleasurable activities that are age-appropriate, active and experiential, memorable, and so forth [18].

English teachers must be resourceful in the classroom because they still need to provide engaging learning activities, even when they are working with primary school textbooks and instructional aids that aren't appropriate for the students. A few enjoyable teaching strategies for young English language learners include role-playing, games, storytelling, and music. It's crucial that English teachers exercise discretion when selecting and utilizing media and textbooks to enhance their teaching-learning activities, particularly when instructing younger students. They must determine

whether the lessons, resources, and content are suitable for the students' language proficiency. For instance, teachers can present subjects that discuss foreign nations as input and other subjects that discuss topics pertaining to the students' home country as output [21]. This demonstrates the significance of national identity; even though the pupils are studying a foreign language, they do not lose or forget it. In order to better assist their students, English teachers should also be open-minded in their thinking about learning, trying new things, and enhancing their own competencies [16] [17]. Additionally, since learning resources are what will be used to enhance the teaching-learning process in the classroom, it is imperative to plan for their absence.

Second, because English language learners prefer to move around and because physical activity will take up most of the class time, English teachers must create a comfortable learning environment [16] [17]. Teachers may also need to plan an outdoor activity to introduce their students to the surrounding area. They must also consider the fact that students keep a report book in which they record their progress in learning English. Teachers must serve as the foundation for creating activities that are suitable for the needs and abilities of the students.

Lastly, teachers also have a responsibility to inform parents about the importance of learning English because it is a global language in the modern world.

Parents can be persuaded by them if they can demonstrate that a large number of students can succeed in learning English through participation in international debate competitions and other similar events. If parents do ultimately encourage their kids to learn English, educators must offer more engaging activities rather than challenging and tedious ones.

## CONCLUSION

To put it briefly, it is difficult to teach English in primary schools. Additionally, there are several advantages to introducing and teaching English in primary schools. This means that since students will have more time and opportunities to learn English, teaching English in primary schools will benefit them more. Primary English instruction gives kids more chances to learn about and become more accepting of other cultures [10]. However, to meet the aforementioned challenges and provide high-quality English instruction, it must be carefully planned and coordinated.

To put it briefly, to enhance their abilities and effectiveness as teachers, English language instructors working with younger students must be aware of the habits, traits, and needs of their students. Additionally, they will become professionals in their field, especially when teaching primary school pupils, if they have an open mind, are willing to ask questions, have a reading habit, and are curious enough to open a dictionary.



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