

TEACHING ENGLISH IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN INDONESIA: WHAT'S MISSING AND HOW TO FIX IT

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Received: Mei 2026 ; Revised: June 2026; Accepted: June 2026

ABSTRACT

Early childhood education provides the foundation for lifelong learning, with language development playing a crucial role in children's cognitive, linguistic, and socio-emotional growth. This study explores the challenges teachers face in implementing English language education in Indonesian Early Childhood Education (ECE) institutions and identifies institutional support that can address resource limitations. Unlike previous studies focusing on children's language outcomes, this research examines teachers' experiences and support systems as determinants of effective English instruction. A qualitative multiple-site study was conducted across 17 purposively selected ECE institutions using questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. The findings indicate that teachers struggle with limited teaching resources, insufficient professional training, and inadequate institutional support. Conversely, professional development opportunities, supportive policies, and collaborative practices facilitate effective implementation. The study extends understanding of the relationship between teacher capacity and institutional ecosystems while providing practical recommendations to strengthen teacher development, improve resource provision, and inform policies that enhance sustainable English language education in Indonesian ECE settings.

Keywords: early childhood education; English language teaching; institutional support; professional development; teacher training

ABSTRAK

Pendidikan anak usia dini merupakan fondasi penting bagi pembelajaran sepanjang hayat, dengan perkembangan bahasa sebagai aspek utama yang mendukung perkembangan kognitif, linguistik, dan sosial-emosional anak. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengeksplorasi kendala yang dihadapi guru dalam mengimplementasikan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di lembaga PAUD di Indonesia serta mengidentifikasi bentuk dukungan institusional yang dapat mengatasi keterbatasan sumber daya. Berbeda dengan penelitian sebelumnya yang berfokus pada hasil belajar anak, penelitian ini menyoroti pengalaman guru dan sistem dukungan sebagai faktor penentu keberhasilan implementasi. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi multisitus pada 17 lembaga PAUD yang dipilih secara purposive. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dan analisis dokumen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa keterbatasan pembelajaran, minimnya pelatihan profesional, dan kurangnya dukungan kelembagaan menjadi tantangan utama. Sebaliknya, pengembangan profesional, kebijakan yang mendukung, dan praktik kolaboratif memperkuat implementasi pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Temuan ini memberikan rekomendasi untuk memperkuat kapasitas guru, penyediaan sumber daya, dan kebijakan yang mendukung keberlanjutan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di PAUD.

Kata Kunci: pendidikan anak usia dini; pembelajaran bahasa Inggris; dukungan institusi; pengembangan profesional; pelatihan guru

How to Cite:

How to Cite: Pratiwi, W. R., Juhana, Yusof, N. M., Bermillo, J. E., & Maulina. (2026). Teaching English in early childhood education in Indonesia: What's missing and how to fix it. *IJEE (Indonesian Journal of English Education)*, 13(1), 159–174. <https://doi.org/10.15408/ijee.v13i1.52576>

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IJEE (Indonesian Journal of English Education), 13 (1), 2026

P-ISSN: 2356-1777, E-ISSN: 2443-0390 | DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15408/ijee.v13i1.52576>

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INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education (ECE) plays a foundational role in shaping a child's cognitive, linguistic, and socio-emotional development (Mondi et al., 2021). Language acquisition, as one of the key competencies cultivated during this period, is a cornerstone for lifelong learning and communication. The rising prominence of English as a global lingua franca has positioned it as a priority in early education in many countries (Gallagher, 2024; Kopchak et al., 2022; Mair, 2024). Research has consistently demonstrated that early exposure to English not only enhances linguistic skills but also prepares children for global opportunities by fostering cultural awareness and adaptability while supporting broader cognitive development (Comeros et al., 2024; Gillet et al., 2021; Hossain, 2024; Rohman, 2024; Trebits, 2022); Xia et al., 2024). However, the implementation of early English language education is often fraught with systemic challenges, particularly in resource-constrained settings where teachers grapple with inadequate training, insufficient teaching materials, and misaligned curricular demands (Omidire, 2021).

Neuroscientific research has emphasized the heightened plasticity of the young brain, which is particularly sensitive to language acquisition during early years (Gualtieri & Finn, 2022; Luby et al., 2022; ; Northey et al., 2025). Early second-language exposure also supports metalinguistic development and contributes to positive long-term educational outcomes (D'Angelo & Sorace, 2022; Kirss et al., 2021; Nguyen & Winsler, 2022). Despite these recognized benefits, there is substantial variation in the quality and accessibility of early English education across regions, reflecting disparities in teacher training, resource allocation, and curricular frameworks (Zickafoose et al., 2024).

Several key studies have explored the integration of English education into early childhood curricula. Teacher professional development has been identified as a critical factor in ensuring the success of English instruction (Kirss et al., 2021; Pourhassan & Nazari, 2023; Zeng, 2023; Zucker et al., 2021). Institutional support, such as the provision of teaching aids and well-structured curricula, has also been shown to enhance instructional quality (Idris et al., 2025). However, much of the existing literature has focused on high-resource environments, leaving a gap in understanding how low-resource contexts address the unique challenges of early English instruction. Moreover, previous studies have largely examined instructional strategies, children's language outcomes, or teacher competencies as separate issues, while limited attention has been given to how teacher experiences, institutional support systems, and resource constraints interact to influence the implementation of English instruction in early childhood education, particularly in developing countries such as Indonesia. Consequently, there remains insufficient empirical evidence explaining how these interconnected factors shape classroom practices and what forms of support are most needed to improve the quality of English education in diverse ECE settings.

In Indonesia, the integration of English instruction into early childhood education remains inconsistent and underdeveloped. While some urban-based private institutions have begun implementing English exposure through songs, storytelling, and play-based activities, many public and rural ECE settings continue to lack access to trained English teachers or appropriate instructional materials (Shan & Aziz, 2022). Furthermore, discussions from preliminary focus group interviews with teachers suggest a widespread uncertainty about curriculum alignment, as well as a strong need for professional development and institutional support.

These findings resonate with previous research highlighting the systemic inequities in Indonesia's early education sector, particularly in under-resourced settings. Although the national education framework encourages early literacy and school readiness, English language instruction remains peripheral and unevenly applied (Sidauruk et al., 2025; Widiastuti, 2025). Accordingly, this study addresses these gaps by examining English language implementation across multiple Early Childhood Education institutions in Indonesia from teachers' perspectives. Rather than focusing solely on children's learning outcomes or teaching techniques, it investigates how teacher capacity,

institutional support, and resource availability collectively shape English language instruction in diverse educational contexts, providing context-specific evidence to support sustainable English education policies and practices in resource-constrained ECE settings.

This study addresses existing research gaps by conceptualizing teacher capacity, institutional support, and resource availability as an interconnected ecosystem influencing English language education in Indonesian Early Childhood Education. It contributes by providing empirical evidence from diverse ECE contexts, offering a holistic understanding of teacher and institutional support, and proposing context-sensitive recommendations to strengthen policy, professional development, and the sustainability of early English education.

Resource constraints present significant obstacles to implementing effective early childhood English education. Studies in resource-constrained settings reveal that teachers often work with overcrowded classrooms, outdated materials, and limited access to professional development opportunities (Akpalu et al., 2025; Mavhandu et al., 2025; Muliya et al., 2025). These challenges further hinder the effective implementation of English language teaching. Addressing these barriers is also consistent with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which promotes inclusive and equitable quality education for all (United Nations, 2020). Accordingly, this study contributes to advancing educational equity by addressing resource gaps and teacher constraints that continue to limit equitable access to quality early English education (Mehmood et al., 2025; Nasution, 2024).

This research seeks to contribute to the discourse on early childhood English education by examining the systemic barriers and enabling factors that influence the implementation of English instruction in diverse settings. Specifically, it aims to answer the following questions: What curricula are used in early childhood English education? What challenges do teachers face in implementing English instruction? What factors support effective English teaching? And how can stakeholders address resource gaps to improve early English education? These questions are particularly relevant in the context of evolving curricular demands, which require re-evaluating teacher support systems, pedagogical practices, and resource allocation strategies for effective English language instruction in Early Childhood Education (Al-Smadi, 2024; Desimone, 2025; Zhang, 2022). Accordingly, this study aims to inform strategies for bridging resource gaps and enhancing teacher support systems for policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders. This research not only advances the field of early childhood English education but also lays the groundwork for future studies aimed at improving educational outcomes for young learners globally.

METHODS

Research design

This study employed a qualitative multiple-site study design to explore the implementation of English language teaching across Early Childhood Education (ECE) institutions, including kindergartens, playgroups, and community-based ECE centres in Indonesia (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2018). A multiple-site design was considered appropriate because the study sought to examine a common educational phenomenon across diverse institutional and geographical contexts rather than focusing on a single bounded case (Stake, 2006; Yin, 2018). This approach enabled comparisons across multiple ECE settings and generated a richer understanding of how teacher capacity, institutional support, and resource availability influenced the implementation of English language teaching in different contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The multiple-site design also facilitated the exploration of similarities and contextual differences among participating institutions (Stake, 2006; Yin, 2018). By incorporating data from questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis, the study was able to capture both shared patterns and context-specific experiences related to English language teaching

through methodological triangulation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This design therefore provided a comprehensive understanding of the systemic challenges and enabling factors affecting English language implementation across diverse Indonesian ECE institutions.

Research site and participants

The participants in this study consisted of teachers responsible for implementing English language activities in 17 Early Childhood Education (ECE) institutions across Indonesia, including Kindergartens, Playgroups, and Community-based Early Childhood Education Centers. The unit of analysis was the teacher responsible for planning and implementing English language instruction within each participating institution. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (1) actively teaching in an ECE institution, (2) directly involved in English language teaching or English-related learning activities, and (3) willing to participate in both the questionnaire and follow-up interview phases.

Rather than aiming for statistical representativeness, the purposive sampling strategy sought to achieve maximum variation by including institutions with diverse educational contexts, institutional capacities, teacher experiences, geographical locations, and socio-educational environments. This approach is consistent with qualitative multiple-site research, which seeks information-rich cases that reflect contextual diversity rather than statistical generalization.

To ensure representation from various geographical contexts, table 1 presents the institutional profiles based on ECE type, major island location (e.g., Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Papua, Bali, Nusa Tenggara), and area classification (urban, semi-urban, or rural). This classification highlights the environmental and socio-educational contexts that may shape teachers' experiences and access to resources. The participating institutions represented diverse educational settings rather than a statistically representative sample of all Indonesian ECE institutions, enabling cross-site comparisons across different geographical and socio-economic contexts.

Table 1. Characteristics of Participating Early Childhood Education Institutions (N = 17)

Characteristic	Category	n	%
ECE Institution Type	Kindergarten (<i>Taman Kanak-Kanak/ TK</i>)	7	41.2
	Playgroup (<i>Kelompok Bermain/ KB</i>)	5	29.4
	Community-based ECE Unit (<i>Satuan PAUD Sejenis/ SPS</i>).	5	29.4
Geographical Location	Java	7	41.2
	Sumatra	2	11.8
	Kalimantan	2	11.8
	Sulawesi	2	11.8
	Bali	2	11.8
	Papua	1	5.9
	Nusa Tenggara	1	5.9
Area Classification	Urban	7	41.2
	Semi-urban	5	29.4
	Rural	5	29.4

Table 2 below summarizes the institutional characteristics of the participating Early Childhood Education (ECE) institutions. The institutions represented diverse organizational profiles in terms of establishment duration, staffing, and student enrollment. Most institutions had been operating for more than ten years (41.2%), while 35.3% had been established within the past one to five years. Teacher staffing was generally small, with nearly two-thirds of institutions employing three

to five teachers (64.7%). Student enrollment also varied considerably, with the largest proportion of institutions serving more than 30 children (41.2%).

Table 2. Institutional Characteristics of Participating Early Childhood Education Institutions (N = 17)

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Duration of Establishment	< 1 year	1	5.9
	1-5 years	6	35.3
	6-10 years	3	17.6
	> 10 years	7	41.2
Number of Teachers	< 3	6	35.3
	3-5	11	64.7
	6-10	0	0
	> 10	0	0
Student Enrollment	< 10	2	11.8
	11-20	4	23.5
	21-30	4	23.5
	> 30	7	41.2

Following the initial questionnaire phase involving teachers from 17 Early Childhood Education (ECE) institutions across Indonesia, five institutions were purposively selected to participate in the interview phase. The selection was guided by the principle of maximum variation sampling, aiming to capture a broad spectrum of institutional profiles and teaching environments. Several criteria were considered in the selection process, including the duration of institutional establishment, the number of teachers and students, and the geographical and socio-environmental context (urban, semi-urban, rural; Java and outer islands). This approach ensured that the selected cases would reflect the diversity of early childhood education settings across Indonesia and offer rich, comparative insights into English language teaching practices.

The five institutions selected for the interview phase (P1-P5) represented diverse early childhood education settings across Indonesia in terms of geographical location, institutional maturity, and educational context. Specifically, P1 represented an urban kindergarten in Java, P2 a rural kindergarten in Kalimantan, P3 a semi-urban playgroup in Sumatra, P4 a rural community-based ECE centre in Nusa Tenggara, and P5 a semi-urban playgroup in Java. Together, these institutions provided diverse perspectives on English language teaching across urban, semi-urban, rural, and geographically diverse contexts.

The interview participants were selected from these institutions to provide rich, contextually diverse perspectives on English language teaching across different institutional and geographical settings. This maximum variation strategy enhanced the credibility and transferability of the findings by capturing both common patterns and context-specific experiences across multiple ECE contexts in Indonesia.

Data collection and analysis

This study utilized three primary research instruments: a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. These instruments were designed to gather comprehensive and in-depth data on the implementation of English language teaching in ECE. The questionnaire was the initial step of data collection in this study to gather insights on English language teaching in ECE institutions. It was distributed electronically using Google Forms. The questionnaire consisted of both closed and open-ended questions, addressing key areas related to teaching practices, student engagement, available resources, challenges faced, and government support for English language education in ECE.

The semi-structured interviews in this study aimed to gather in-depth insights from teachers at ECE regarding the implementation of English language teaching. The interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia to ensure clarity and ease of communication, allowing participants to express their thoughts more comfortably in their native language. The duration of each interview was approximately 60 minutes, though this varied depending on the depth of the responses and the engagement of the participants. The interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants to ensure the accuracy of the data collected and facilitate subsequent analysis. This qualitative data provided rich insights into the realities of teaching English at the early childhood level, complementing the broader data gathered from other research instruments like the questionnaire and document analysis.

Document analysis was a crucial method in this study as it helped to understand the institutional frameworks guiding English language teaching in ECE. By reviewing documents such as curricula, teaching policies, and guidelines, the analysis assessed how well these aligned with the objectives of early English language education, the content of English materials, and institutional strategies supporting instruction. The questionnaire provided to respondents contained open-ended questions, and the analysis focused on identifying key themes in the responses. Each answer was examined to uncover recurring patterns and issues related to the implementation of English language teaching in ECE, the challenges faced by teachers, and the support received from the government.

For data collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis, thematic analysis was employed to identify key themes emerging from the teachers' experiences and viewpoints. The interview transcripts were coded to uncover aspects such as challenges in teaching, teachers' expectations for improvement, and factors supporting effective English language instruction. Additionally, document analysis compared institutional frameworks, such as curricula and teaching guidelines, with actual teaching practices.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The findings are presented based on three data sources: questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis, providing a comprehensive understanding of English language teaching implementation in Early Childhood Education (ECE) institutions across Indonesia.

Survey of Educators' Insights

In terms of teaching methods, the data suggests that while traditional interactive approaches such as singing (n=7) and storytelling (n=4) remain widely used in early childhood English teaching, the relatively lower use of digital media (n=5) and minimal use of role-playing (n=1) highlight a gap in the diversification of teaching strategies (Figure 1).

Regarding student engagement, the responses suggest a positive but somewhat inconsistent level of enthusiasm. While 4 participants reported that students are very active and enthusiastic, 6 respondents indicated that students are often engaged, but 6 others mentioned that students are rarely or very rarely enthusiastic (Figure 2).

When it comes to facilities and teaching media, a significant concern arises as 11 respondents indicated that the facilities are "less adequate" or "not adequate," with only 3 respondents reporting that the facilities are "adequate" (Figure 3).

The challenges faced in teaching English reveal that a lack of teaching media is the most common obstacle (6 responses), followed by low teacher competence (7 responses; Figure 4).

Figure 1. Most frequent teaching methods used in English classes.

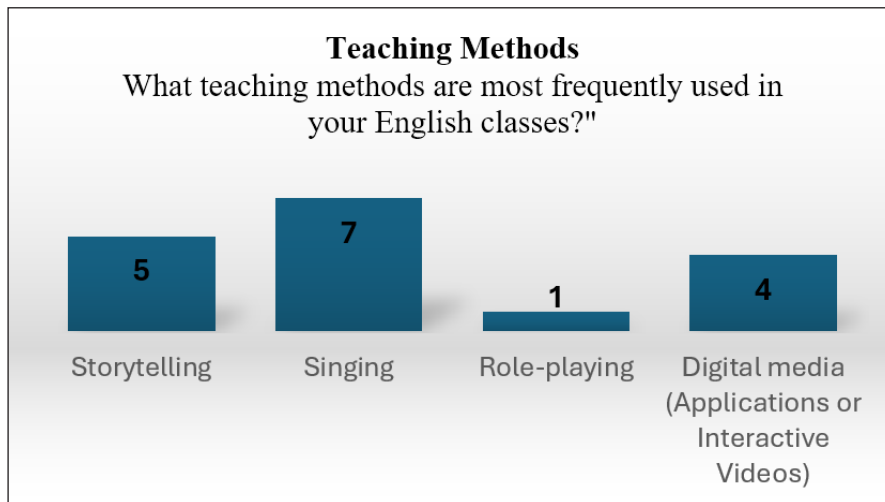


Figure 2. Students engagement during English learning.

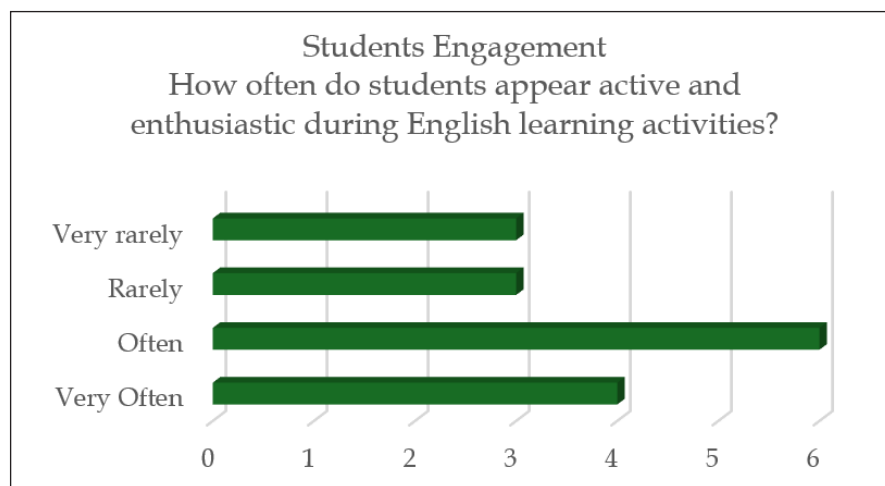


Figure 3. Sufficiency of facilities and teaching media to support English learning.

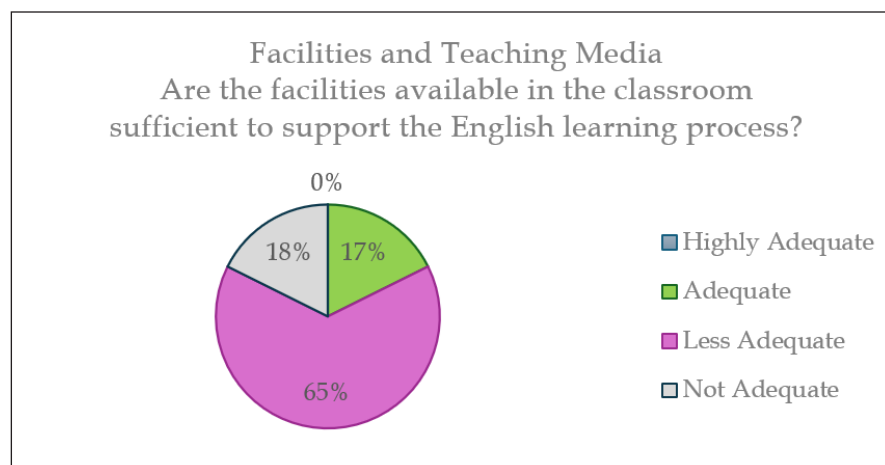


Figure 4. Challenge faced when teaching English in ECE.

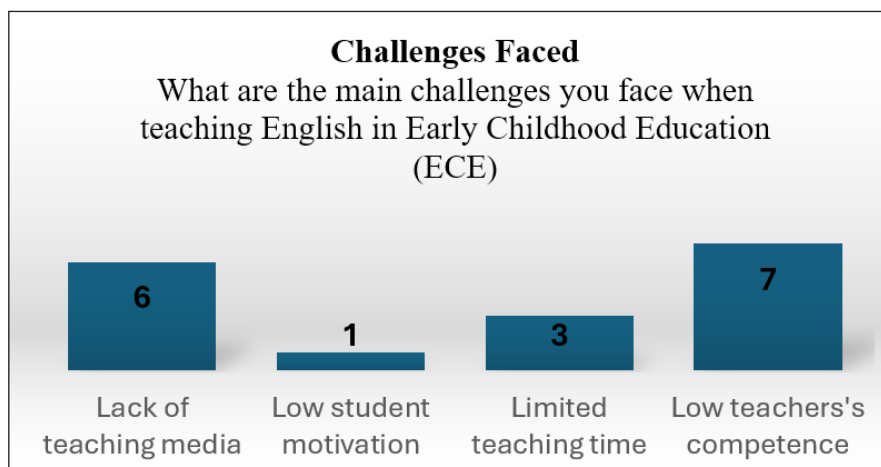
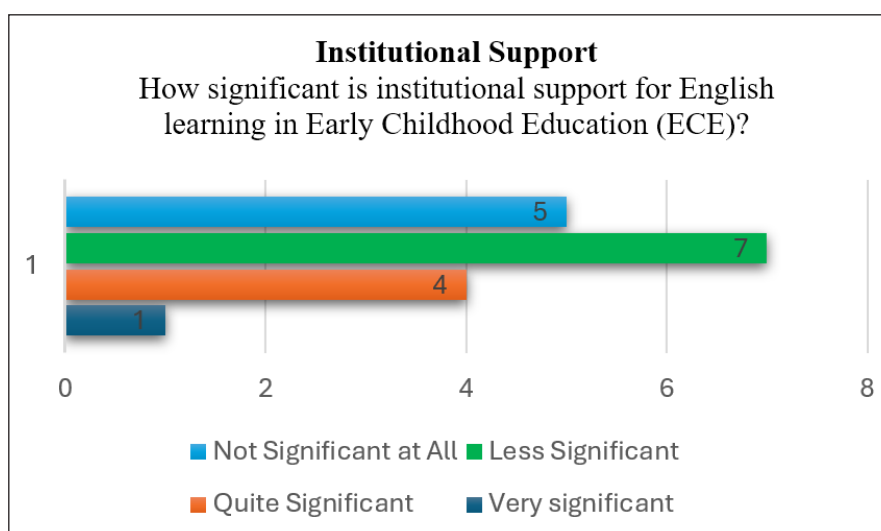


Figure 5. Institutional support to support English learning in ECE.



Finally, regarding institutional support, 7 respondents felt that the support was "less significant," and 5 reported that there was no support at all (Figure 5). This suggests that the institutional framework for supporting English education in early childhood is lacking, which could hinder the development and implementation of effective teaching practices.

In-Depth Teacher Dialogues

The findings of this study are organized around four main themes that emerged from the analysis of the interview responses: Current Implementation of English Language Teaching, Challenges Faced by Educators, Expectations for Improvement, and Supporting Factors for Effective Teaching. These themes were identified based on recurring patterns in the responses from the participants.

a. Current Implementation of English Language Teaching

This theme delves into the strategies employed by teachers, their perceptions of effective methods, and the areas requiring improvement.

Code 1.1: Teacher's English Proficiency

Teachers' confidence in their English proficiency plays a pivotal role in shaping classroom practices. However, some teachers expressed reservations about their language skills, which influenced their teaching approaches. Participant 1 explained:

"Currently, I mostly rely on storytelling, singing, and sometimes role-playing. Storytelling seems to be the most engaging for the children, but I still feel that I haven't found the best and the right teaching method that works best for young learners."

This statement underscores a reliance on accessible methods due to uncertainties in proficiency, suggesting a need for tailored professional development opportunities.

Code 1.2: Availability of Suitable Teaching Methods

The participants highlighted an ongoing exploration of age-appropriate and effective teaching strategies. For example, Participant 3 shared:

"I rely heavily on role-playing and storytelling. Children love to act out the stories and use simple English phrases. It's one of the best ways to engage them in learning English. However, I do feel that sometimes the activities don't fully match their learning abilities."

Similarly, Participant 2 emphasized the importance of engaging tools:

"I primarily use digital media such as interactive videos and integrate songs into the lessons. While children generally enjoy and engage well with the songs, I often notice that these methods are not always aligned with their developmental stages or learning needs."

These reflections suggest that while existing methods show promise, they often fall short of meeting the developmental needs of young learners.

Code 1.3: Motivation Levels of Students

Motivating young learners to actively engage in English lessons is a recurring challenge. Participant 4 observed:

"I use a combination of storytelling, songs, and some digital media, like simple educational videos. The children really seem to enjoy singing and listening to stories in English. I'm still exploring the best method to ensure that the children understand and retain what they learn."

Despite positive responses to activities like singing and storytelling, there remains uncertainty about how effectively these methods sustain long-term motivation and comprehension.

b. Challenges Faced by Educators

This theme identifies the primary obstacles faced by educators in the process of teaching English to young learners.

Code 1: Lack of Teacher Training in English

Teachers' English proficiency is a major concern. All participants reported a lack of professional development opportunities in English language teaching. Participant 1 mentioned: "Teachers are not yet professional in English, and we haven't found a suitable method for teaching children."

Code 2: Inappropriate Teaching Methods for Children's Age

The lack of appropriate teaching methods for young learners was another key concern. Some participants expressed concerns about the mismatch between teaching methods and the developmental needs of children. This highlights the need for research-based and age-appropriate teaching methods that can engage children in the learning process. As Participant 3 noted: "We haven't been able to find an effective method to teach English to children." Participant 2 and 4 supported the previous statement who argue that they tried to use methods, but they didn't seem suitable for the age group they were teaching."

Code 3: Inadequate Teaching Facilities

Lack of teaching materials and resources was another significant challenge. This indicates a need for more systematic support and resources from educational authorities to strengthen English teaching. As Participant 2 expressed: "The institution doesn't provide enough resources or guidance for teaching English."

c. Expectations for Improvement

This theme explores the participants' hopes for improvements in English language teaching.

Code 1: Improved Collaboration and Teacher Training

Many participants expressed the need for more professional development in English teaching. Collaboration among teachers and access to professional development are crucial factors for improving teaching quality. Participant 5 mentioned: "I believe that teacher collaboration and ongoing training are vital for improving our teaching practices." Participant 1 support the statement by saying. Participant 1 stated: "I hope that teachers can receive more training to improve their English language skills and teaching English to young children."

Code 2: More Engaging Teaching Methods Facilities

There is a strong expectation for more engaging and interactive teaching methods. Several participants noted the importance of improving teaching facilities Participant 3 and 5 emphasized that they wish there were more creative and fun methods to teach English that would keep children engaged and motivated. Besides, the availability of engaging teaching materials such as books, videos, and songs can significantly enhance learning. As Participant 3 suggested:

"Our classrooms are not equipped with the necessary resources to teach English effectively. If we had access to more engaging resources like multimedia tools and interactive materials such as books, songs, and educational videos, teaching English would be easier and more fun. Of course, the lack of resources makes it difficult for teachers to create engaging and dynamic learning environments."

Code 3: Family Involvement in Language Learning

The involvement of families in the language learning process is another factor contributing to effective teaching. Participant 4 noted: "Family involvement in language learning would help reinforce what children are learning in class." This suggests that greater family support can enhance children's language learning experiences outside the classroom.

Code 4: Better Student Motivation

Even though students' motivation is not highly echoed, however, there is also a strong desire to improve student motivation. Participant 4 stated: "There needs to be a better system to encourage and motivate students to learn English." This highlights the importance of developing strategies to foster intrinsic motivation among young learners. Another statement from Participant 1 is

"The kids are generally excited about learning English, which helps a lot in terms of motivation. Additionally, I've found a teaching method that seems to work for them, which involves combining fun activities with simple language learning."

Curricular Content Review

The findings presented in Table 3 below are derived from a comprehensive document analysis of lesson plans, curriculum documents, and other instructional materials provided by the participants.

Table 3. Thematic Analysis of Curricular Documents on English Language Instruction in ECE Settings

No	Themes	Evidence from Documents	Intrepretation
1.	Teaching Methods	Lesson Plan A (Week 3): " <i>Students sing 'Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes' followed by teacher storytelling using picture cards.</i> " Lesson Plan B (Week 4): " <i>The teacher introduces animal vocabulary using flashcards, followed by choral repetition and a closing English song.</i> " No lesson plans explicitly documented role-play, pair work, or collaborative communicative activities.	These documents indicate that singing and storytelling are the dominant instructional approaches, whereas structured communicative activities such as role-play are rarely documented.
2.	Student Engagement	Student Activity: " <i>Students listen to the teacher's instructions, repeat target vocabulary, and respond collectively during the lesson.</i> " Lesson Plan D specifies activities such as " <i>repeat after the teacher,</i> " " <i>answer together,</i> " and " <i>sing together,</i> " with no evidence of differentiated tasks, small-group activities, or opportunities for children to make individual learning choices.	The reviewed documents indicate that student participation is primarily organized through whole-class listening and repetition activities, with limited evidence of differentiated tasks or learner-centered engagement strategies.
3.	Teaching Facilities	Teaching Resources: " <i>Picture books, worksheets, posters, English songs, and flashcards.</i> " No references were found to interactive digital media, educational applications, videos, smart boards, QR-based learning resources, or other multimedia technologies.	The reviewed documents predominantly rely on conventional printed materials and songs, with minimal references to multimedia resources or digital learning technologies.
4.	Alignment with Curriculum	Learning Activity: " <i>Teacher introduces vocabulary through songs and repetition.</i> " The curriculum documents specify learning objectives such as " <i>children recognize and pronounce simple English vocabulary</i> " and " <i>children respond to basic classroom expressions.</i> " However, the accompanying lesson plans mainly repeated similar instructional sequences (song-repetition-worksheet) and contained limited evidence of varied assessment strategies or differentiated learning activities aligned with these objectives.	Although curriculum documents specify clear English learning objectives, the accompanying lesson plans provide limited variation in instructional activities and assessment strategies to support these objectives.
5.	Challenges in Implementation	Coding Result: " <i>No curriculum sections explicitly described family participation or follow-up English activities outside the classroom.</i> " The reviewed curriculum documents also lacked guidance on home-based English practice, parent-assisted learning tasks, the integration of creative teaching resources, or recommendations for using digital learning materials beyond classroom instruction.	The absence of these elements suggests that curriculum implementation remains predominantly classroom-centered and provides limited guidance for extending English learning through family engagement or innovative instructional practices.

Discussion

Teaching Methods and Student Engagement

Consistent with previous studies, Singing and storytelling not only provide a familiar and engaging context for language acquisition but also promote emotional and cognitive connections, enhancing vocabulary retention and comprehension (Bao, 2023; Maureen et al., 2022; Rahiem, 2021). However, the limited use of role-playing and moderate reliance on digital media indicates untapped opportunities to diversify instructional strategies. Digital tools, when appropriately integrated, can support individualized learning and foster multimodal language experiences, particularly in settings where physical resources are constrained (Liang & Lim, 2021; Qushem et al., 2021). Expanding the repertoire of teaching methods to include role-playing and technology-enhanced approaches could address the variability in student engagement observed in the study.

The inconsistency in student enthusiasm further underscores the need for innovative teaching practices. This finding reflects the broader challenge of sustaining attention and motivation among young learners, particularly in resource-constrained settings. Incorporating student-centered approaches, such as project-based activities and gamified learning, may enhance

engagement which emphasize creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking (Eswaran, 2024; Vaithianathan et al., 2024).

Resource Availability and Infrastructure

Consistent with Singh (2024), resource constraints as a critical obstacle in resource-limited environments. The lack of adequate teaching aids, digital tools, and physical infrastructure not only limits teachers' ability to deliver engaging lessons but also undermines students' learning experiences. As Jansen (2024) emphasize, early exposure to enriched language environments is crucial for optimizing neural plasticity and linguistic development. Without sufficient resources, the potential benefits of early English education may remain unrealized.

Addressing these gaps requires a multifaceted approach involving policymakers, educational institutions, and community stakeholders. Investments in infrastructure, including digital classrooms and age-appropriate teaching materials, could bridge resource disparities and support more inclusive learning environments (Blyznyuk et al., 2025; Nafiu & Olaitan, 2025). Institutional support in the form of grants or subsidies for schools could further mitigate resource limitations, enabling teachers to implement effective instructional strategies (Ackah-Jnr & Fluckiger, 2023).

Teacher Training and Professional Development

Consistent with global evidence, This mirrors global trends in low-resource contexts, where teachers often lack the necessary expertise to deliver high-quality language instruction (Grifenhagen & Dickinson, 2023; Weadman et al., 2023). Professional development programs focused on second language pedagogy and early childhood education could address this gap, equipping teachers with the skills and confidence to implement effective methods such as storytelling, role-playing, and digital learning.

Training programs should also address teachers' language proficiency, as their confidence in using English directly influences classroom practices (Bhardwaj et al., 2025). For instance, Participant 1's reliance on storytelling and singing due to limited English proficiency underscores the need for targeted language support. Providing access to language improvement courses and peer mentoring opportunities could empower teachers to adopt more diverse and innovative pedagogical approaches (Andrews et al., 2025).

Institutional and Policy Support

The lack of institutional support reported by respondents highlights systemic barriers that hinder the effective implementation of early English education. This aligns with studies emphasizing the role of policy frameworks and institutional backing in shaping educational quality (Vreuls et al., 2025). Without adequate support, teachers may struggle to meet ambitious curricular goals, particularly in marginalized communities where disparities in funding and infrastructure are pronounced (Lynch et al., 2024).

Global initiatives such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) call for inclusive and equitable quality education, which necessitates robust policy measures to address systemic inequities (United Nations, 2020). Policymakers should prioritize early English education by providing funding for teacher training, developing context-specific curricula, and ensuring equitable resource allocation. Collaborative efforts involving local governments, NGOs, and private stakeholders could further enhance institutional capacity, creating a more supportive environment for early English instruction (Osegbue, 2025).

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The findings of this study emphasize the critical need to address resource gaps, improve teacher training, and provide institutional support to enhance the quality of English language education in early childhood settings. Importantly, the study demonstrates that teacher capacity, institutional support, and resource availability should be understood as interconnected factors influencing the successful implementation of English language education in Early Childhood Education. To improve student engagement, a multifaceted approach is needed that includes better teaching resources, more professional development opportunities for teachers, and stronger institutional support. By addressing these gaps, ECE institutions can better equip teachers to foster a more engaging, effective, and supportive learning environment for young learners, ultimately enhancing their early language development and preparing them for future academic success.

Future research could evaluate the effectiveness of various teaching methods on student engagement and language acquisition in early childhood education settings. Longitudinal and intervention-based studies could further examine the long-term impact of early English education and the role of family involvement in supporting children's language development.

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