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English Language Learning Strategies to Improve the Language Skills of Elementary School Students

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ABSTRACT

English language learning in primary schools plays an important role in building students' language skills from an early age. However, in practice, English language learning still faces various challenges, such as low student motivation, limited learning strategies, and a lack of media that is appropriate for primary school students. This study aims to examine various effective English learning strategies in improving the language skills of primary school students. The research method used is a literature study by reviewing SINTA indexed national journal articles and reputable international journals relevant to the research topic. The data were analysed using qualitative descriptive analysis techniques by grouping and synthesising previous research findings. The results of the study show that the application of interactive and communicative learning strategies, such as the Audio Lingual Method, Total Physical Response (TPR), cooperative learning, and the use of visual and audiovisual media, can increase the motivation, participation, and language skills of primary school students. Thus, the application of varied English learning strategies that are appropriate for the characteristics of primary school students is necessary to create effective and meaningful learning.

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INTRODUCTION

English language learning at the elementary school level plays a strategic role as the initial foundation for developing students' language skills. In the era of globalization, English has become an important international communication tool for accessing information, technology, and science. Therefore, the introduction and learning of English from an early age is expected to shape positive attitudes and improve students' language skills in a gradual and sustainable manner.

However, in practice, English language learning in elementary schools still faces various problems. One of the main problems is the position of English as a

foreign language that is rarely used in students' daily lives. This condition leads to limited language exposure, making it difficult for students to develop language skills, especially speaking skills. In addition, many students show fear, lack of confidence, and anxiety when asked to use English in the learning process (Laila et al., 2023).

Another problem that often arises stems from the learning strategies used by teachers. English language learning in elementary schools still tends to be teacher-centered, with an emphasis on memorizing vocabulary and grammar rules. As a result, students' opportunities to actively practice using English are limited. Research shows that the lack of variety in methods, the minimal use of interesting learning media, and the limited understanding of teachers regarding the characteristics of early age learners also contribute to the low level of student engagement in English language learning (Wulandari et al., 2020).

In fact, elementary school students have characteristics that make them enjoy playing, moving, and learning through direct experience. Therefore, learning strategies that are in line with students' needs and cognitive development are needed. Strategies such as the use of language games, pair and group activities, communicative approaches, and the use of visual and audiovisual media have been proven to increase students' motivation, participation, and language skills. Laila et al., (2023) emphasizes that the application of interactive and contextual learning strategies can help students reduce their anxiety about language and increase their courage in speaking English.

In line with this, Wulandari et al., (2020) found that the listen and repeat, question and answer, games, and cooperative learning strategies are effective approaches in teaching English to young learners. These strategies enable students to learn actively, enjoyably, and meaningfully, so that their language skills can develop optimally.

Based on these issues, this article aims to examine and analyze various effective English learning strategies in improving the language skills of elementary school students. This study is expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions to teachers and education stakeholders in designing English learning that is more effective, communicative, and in line with the characteristics of elementary school students.

RESEARCH METHODE

This research employed a literature study method with a semi-systematic review approach to examine effective English learning strategies in improving the language skills of elementary school students. This method was chosen to

provide a structured and comprehensive analysis of previous studies while maintaining flexibility in interpreting findings (Snyder, 2019). The data sources were obtained from nationally indexed SINTA journal articles and reputable international open-access journals relevant to English language teaching for young learners. The literature search was conducted using keywords such as “English learning strategies,” “English teaching in elementary school,” “young learners,” and “instructional strategies,” with a focus on studies published between 2020 and 2025. The selected articles specifically discussed learning strategies, characteristics of early learners, and challenges and solutions in English learning at the elementary level (Laila et al., 2023; Wulandari et al., 2020).

The article selection process involved identifying relevant studies through database searches, screening titles and abstracts based on their relevance to the research objectives, and conducting a full-text review to ensure alignment with the focus of the study. From the initial search results, only articles that met the criteria of discussing instructional strategies at the primary school level were included in the final analysis. The collected data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive and thematic synthesis techniques by grouping, comparing, and synthesizing previous research findings to obtain a comprehensive understanding of effective English learning strategies for elementary school students.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

This research examined eight scholarly articles published in national and international journals between 2022 and 2025, focusing on English instructional approaches at the elementary education level. The selection of these articles was based on their alignment with the research objectives, specifically those investigating the efficacy of diverse pedagogical strategies in enhancing learners' linguistic competencies, motivation, and classroom engagement. A comprehensive overview of the reviewed studies is presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Overview of Reviewed Studies on English Instructional Approaches in Elementary Education

No.	Author(s) (Year)	Instructional Approach	Principal Findings
1	Putri & Sya, (2023)	Audio-Lingual Method and Total Physical Response (TPR)	Both methodologies proved effective in enhancing elementary learners' motivation. Students demonstrated improved

			responsiveness during activities involving auditory exercises, oral repetition, and physical responses to teacher directives. The integration of these approaches fostered a more engaging learning environment conducive to increased motivation.
2	Maria Magdalena Bulu, Ni Putu Artita Dewi, (2025)	Visual and audiovisual media (videos, images, multimodal interactive tools)	The incorporation of visual and audiovisual media enhanced student motivation while reinforcing vocabulary retention. Learners reported that materials presented through combined audio-visual elements were more engaging and comprehensible compared to traditional text-based instruction.
3	Ritan, (2024)	Audiovisual learning materials (integrated images and audio)	Implementation of audiovisual materials contributed to a more dynamic and enjoyable classroom atmosphere. This approach encouraged active student participation, positive responses to instructional content, and greater enthusiasm in following learning activities.
4	Nafsiyah et al., (2025)	Collaborative Learning	Collaborative learning strategies substantially increased student involvement in English instruction. Learners demonstrated greater responsiveness, willingness to express opinions, and active peer interaction throughout educational activities.
5	Martia Azizah, (2022)	Cognitive and social vocabulary techniques (contextual meaning deduction, dictionary usage, vocabulary documentation, repetition, discussions,	Cognitive approaches facilitated more effective vocabulary comprehension and retention. Social strategies involving peer interaction enabled students to exchange knowledge and clarify word

		group collaboration)	meanings. The combination of both approaches supported progressive enhancement of learners' English proficiency.
6	Inayah & Sya, (2024)	Communicative Approach (brief dialogues, question-response exchanges, role-playing scenarios)	The communicative approach enhanced learners' confidence in oral English usage. Students engaged in speaking practice without excessive pressure, emphasizing communicative fluency and meaningful interaction rather than strict grammatical precision. This reduced anxiety and fostered speaking skill development and self-assurance.
7	Laila et al., (2023)	Interactive and contextual instructional approaches	Implementation of interactive and contextual teaching methods helped alleviate language anxiety and increased students' willingness to speak English. These approaches effectively addressed challenges associated with teaching oral skills to young language learners.
8	Wulandari et al., (2020)	Listen and repeat, question-response exchanges, educational games, and collaborative learning	These methodologies proved effective for English instruction with young learners. They facilitated active, enjoyable, and meaningful learning experiences, enabling optimal development of students' linguistic abilities.

Following the examination of studies summarized in Table 1, the findings can be categorized into five primary themes as outlined below:

1. Learning strategies using the Audio-Lingual and Total Physical Response methods increase the motivation of elementary school students

The results of the study show that the use of the Audio-Lingual Method and Total Physical Response (TPR) in English language learning has a positive effect on the learning motivation of elementary school students. Students show better responses to the learning process when learning activities involve listening exercises, repetition of speech, and direct

responses to teacher instructions. These activities make students more interested in participating in learning and easier to absorb the material provided (Putri & Sya, 2023).

In addition, the application of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method encourages students to actively engage through activities that link language with physical movements. Motor involvement in the learning process helps students understand the meaning of vocabulary concretely and increases participation during learning. These results show that the combination of the Audio-Lingual and TPR methods can create a more interesting learning atmosphere and support an increase in student motivation in learning English in elementary school.

2. The use of visual and audiovisual learning media increases the interest and engagement of elementary school students

Analysis of a number of studies shows that the use of visual and audiovisual media in English language learning can increase the interest and engagement of elementary school students during learning activities. For example, research conducted at SDK Santo Yosep Tegal Jaya, Bali, found that the integration of media such as videos, images, and multimodal interactive devices helps increase student motivation while strengthening their memory of the vocabulary they have learned. Students reported that material delivered through media that included audio and visual elements was more interesting and easier to understand than conventional learning based solely on books (Maria Magdalena Bulu, Ni Putu Artita Dewi, 2025). Additionally, another study in an elementary school environment found that the use of audiovisual learning media, including a combination of images and sound, helps create a more dynamic and enjoyable classroom atmosphere. This encourages students to actively participate in learning activities, show positive reactions to the material presented, and follow instructions with more enthusiasm (Ritan, 2024).

3. Cooperative learning increases participation and interaction among elementary school students

Research findings indicate that the application of cooperative learning in English language learning can increase participation and interaction among elementary school students. Through group learning activities, students have the opportunity to communicate, exchange ideas, and work together to complete learning tasks. This pattern of interaction encourages students to be more actively involved during the learning process. The results of the study " show that cooperative learning strategies can significantly increase student engagement in English learning in elementary school classrooms.

Students become more responsive, dare to express their opinions, and actively interact with their peers during learning activities.

4. Vocabulary mastery strategies through cognitive and social techniques support elementary school students' understanding of English

Based on research conducted on elementary school students, vocabulary mastery strategies in English through cognitive and social approaches contribute positively to students' language comprehension. In the context of learning, students utilize cognitive strategies such as guessing the meaning of words based on context, using dictionaries, noting new vocabulary, and repeating to strengthen memory. These strategies help students understand and retain vocabulary more effectively (Martia Azizah, 2022). In addition, social strategies also play an important role in supporting students' vocabulary mastery. Interactions with peers through discussions and group work allow students to exchange information and clarify their understanding of the meanings of the words they are learning. The use of a combination of cognitive and social strategies supports the gradual and continuous improvement of elementary school students' English comprehension.

5. The communicative approach helps increase elementary school students' courage to speak

Application of a communicative approach in English language learning has a positive impact on elementary school students' courage in using the language orally. Through activities that emphasize the use of language in simple contexts, such as short dialogues, question and answer sessions, and role-playing games, students have the opportunity to practice speaking without excessive pressure. This encourages students to be more courageous in expressing their ideas and responding to their conversation partners in English. The communicative approach also helps create a more natural and interactive learning environment. Students do not only focus on grammatical accuracy, but also on fluency and meaningful communication. This supports increased student participation in speaking activities and reduces anxiety when using English in class. Thus, the communicative approach plays a role in developing the speaking skills and confidence of elementary school students (Inayah & Sya, 2024).

Discussion

In this section, the research results are analysed further to gain a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of English learning strategies for primary school students.

1. Audio-Lingual and Total Physical Response Learning in Increasing Primary School Students' Motivation to Learn

The application of the Audio-Lingual Method and Total Physical Response (TPR) in English language learning has proven to be relevant to the developmental characteristics of primary school students, who tend to be active and learn through direct experience. The Audio-Lingual Method emphasises listening exercises and systematic repetition of speech, so that students become accustomed to the sounds, intonation and patterns of English. This approach helps students build language habits without the pressure of formal grammar mastery, which is often a barrier for young learners. Meanwhile, the Total Physical Response (TPR) method combines language with physical activities, enabling students to understand the meaning of language through body movements. This approach makes learning more concrete and enjoyable, and reduces students' anxiety in using English. Physical involvement also helps improve students' focus and memory of the vocabulary they are learning. The combination of these two methods creates an interactive learning environment and supports an increase in student motivation to learn. These findings are in line with research conducted by (Ajiza & Astuti, 2023), which states that the Audio-Lingual and TPR methods are more effective than the Grammar Translation Method in teaching English to primary school students. In that study, students showed higher enthusiasm and more active engagement when learning was conducted through activities such as listening, imitating, and responding to instructions with movements. Thus, the use of the Audio-Lingual and TPR methods can be an effective alternative learning strategy to increase motivation for learning English in primary schools.

2. The use of visual and audiovisual media in increasing the interest of primary school students in learning

The use of visual and audiovisual media in English language learning contributes positively to primary school students' interest in learning. Media such as pictures, videos, animations, and songs help present material in a concrete and interesting way, making it easier for students to understand vocabulary and the context of language use. Presenting material through a combination of visual and audio elements also attracts students' attention and maintains their focus during learning (Ritan, 2024). Learning that involves audiovisual media creates a more varied and less monotonous learning atmosphere. This is important for primary school students who have a limited attention span. The appropriate use of media can increase students' active involvement and encourage their participation

in English learning activities. Thus, visual and audiovisual media play an effective supporting role in English learning in primary schools.

3. Cooperative learning as a means of increasing student participation and interaction

Cooperative learning encourages students to actively engage through collaboration in small groups. In English language learning, this strategy provides space for students to practise communicating, exchanging ideas, and helping each other understand the material. Interaction between students creates a more open learning environment and supports the development of social and language skills. The cooperative approach also helps reduce students' fear of using English because they learn with their peers. Through group discussions and activities, students become more confident and dare to participate in learning. Thus, cooperative learning not only increases student participation but also creates a collaborative and conducive learning atmosphere (Nafsiyah et al., 2025)

4. Vocabulary mastery strategies to support primary school students' understanding of English

Vocabulary mastery is an important foundation in English learning for primary school students. The use of appropriate vocabulary learning strategies, such as noting new words, guessing meanings based on context, and repetition, helps students build their understanding of the language gradually. This strategy enables students to recognise and use vocabulary in various learning situations. In addition to cognitive strategies, social interaction through discussion and group work also plays a role in strengthening students' vocabulary comprehension. By exchanging information, students can clarify the meaning of words and improve their mutual understanding. Therefore, planned and contextual vocabulary mastery strategies support the overall improvement of primary school students' English skills.

5. The communicative approach in increasing primary school students' courage to speak

The communicative approach emphasises the use of language as a means of communication, not merely the mastery of grammatical structures. In primary school English learning, this approach provides opportunities for students to practise speaking through activities such as simple dialogues, question and answer sessions, and role-playing games. These activities help students use English naturally in meaningful contexts. The communicative approach also plays a role in reducing students' anxiety when speaking English. The focus of learning is not only on linguistic accuracy, but also on

courage and fluency in communication (Sya, Yeti Inayah, 2024). Thus, the communicative approach supports the development of speaking skills and increases the confidence of primary school students in learning English.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the literature review and discussion, it can be concluded that the selection and implementation of appropriate learning strategies play a crucial role in improving the English language skills of elementary school students. English language learning at this level must be tailored to the developmental characteristics of young learners, who are generally active, enjoy concrete and enjoyable activities, and learn effectively through direct experience and social interaction.

The findings of this study indicate that several learning strategies have proven effective in enhancing students' motivation, participation, and language skills. The Audio-Lingual Method and Total Physical Response (TPR) are effective in building listening and speaking habits through repetitive exercises and physical activities, which align with the active nature of young learners. The use of visual and audiovisual media increases students' interest and engagement, helps them understand vocabulary in context, and creates a more dynamic classroom atmosphere. Cooperative learning encourages interaction and collaboration among students, thereby improving their communication skills and self-confidence. Furthermore, vocabulary mastery strategies that combine cognitive and social techniques, along with the application of a communicative approach, support students in developing the courage to speak and use English more naturally in meaningful contexts.

Theoretically, this study reinforces the importance of learner-centered and contextually relevant instruction in early language education. Practically, the findings imply that elementary school teachers need to be equipped with pedagogical knowledge and skills to design and implement varied, interactive, and communicative learning strategies. Teachers are encouraged to integrate multiple strategies and media to address students' diverse needs and to create a supportive learning environment that reduces anxiety and fosters active participation.

However, this study has limitations as it relies solely on a literature review without empirical data collection. Therefore, the findings are descriptive and exploratory in nature. Future research is recommended to conduct experimental or classroom action research to empirically test the effectiveness of the strategies discussed. Additionally, further studies could explore other influencing factors such as teacher competency, parental involvement, and

school policy support in shaping the success of English language learning in elementary schools.

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