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# THE MOST EFFECTIVE ENGLISH TEACHING METHODS IN RURAL SCHOOLS

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Abstract: Effective teaching methods in many contexts are still a concern when it comes to teaching English as a foreign language in Indonesia. It relates to a lack of English proficiency. Even after six years of formal language learning, students can still not acquire productive English abilities such as speaking and writing. This study's main objective is to find the English teachers' perspectives concerning the most effective teaching methods in rural schools throughout four districts, Malaka, Kupang, Timor Tengah Utara, and Timor Tengah Selatan. The mixed-method was administered through a questionnaire, data collected from 26 English teachers at Senior High School who met the criteria. In addition, eight respondents were interviewed to learn how to apply effective methods. The most effective methods of teaching English in rural areas include Suggestopedia, Audio-Lingual Method, Communicative Language Teaching, and Task-Based Language Teaching.

Keywords: Effective Method, Foreign Language, Teaching Methods, Rural School

Abstrak: Metode pengajaran yang efektif dalam banyak konteks masih menjadi perhatian dalam pengajaran bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing di Indonesia. Hal ini berkaitan dengan kurangnya kemampuan bahasa Inggris. Bahkan setelah enam tahun belajar bahasa formal, siswa masih tidak dapat memperoleh kemampuan bahasa Inggris yang produktif seperti berbicara dan menulis. Tujuan utama dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui perspektif guru bahasa Inggris tentang metode pengajaran yang paling efektif di sekolah pedesaan di empat kabupaten, Malaka, Kupang, Timor Tengah Utara, dan Timor Tengah Selatan. Metode yan digunakan adalah metode campuran melalui kuesioner, data dikumpulkan dari 26 guru bahasa Inggris di Sekolah Menengah Atas (SMA) yang memenuhi kriteria. Delapan responden diwawancarai untuk mempelajari bagaimana menerapkan metode yang efektif. Metode pengajaran bahasa Inggris yang paling efektif didaerah pedesaan adalah Suggestopedia, Metode Audio-Lingual, Pengajaran Bahasa Komunikatif, dan Pengajaran Bahasa Berbasis Tugas.

Kata Kunci: Metode Efektif, Bahasa Asing, Metode Pengajaran, Sekolah Pedesaan

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#### INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, teacher competence in implementing effective teaching methods in English as a foreign language is currently a major challenge (Sulistiyo, 2016). The results of the Teacher Competency Test (UKG) in Indonesia in 2019 showed that six districts/cities on Timor Island obtained an average score of less than 50 in the Pedagogy and Professional categories in East Nusa Tenggara Province, particularly on the island of Timor. It reveals that teachers' scientific and professional competence is low. English teachers, in particular, have been unable to educate effectively (Munandar & Srimurni,

2021; Syamsinar & Jabu, 2016). As a result, even after studying English for many years, students still find it difficult to master the language's skills.

Students are still considered inadequate in productive English skills such as speaking and writing despite having studied English for nearly 6 years (from grade 7 Junior High School to Senior High School) (Larson, 2014; Lie, 2007; Madya, 2002; Marcellino, 2015; Oktaviyani, 2017; Suryanto, 2014). Furthermore, students are forced to study as hard as they can in a short amount of time to prepare for semester exams (Rahim, 2017), despite studying other subjects that will be tested. It becomes much more difficult for students in rural areas with little access to books and other resources (Febriana et al., 2018). Meanwhile, choosing the appropriate approach for teaching English is a crucial factor in determining learning success (Babai et al., 2008; Munzaki et al., 2017; Park & Lee, 2006).

Students' English language skills will significantly increase if the teachers teach the appropriate method for the context. On the other hand, many teachers have been unable to implement teaching approaches based on students' preferences for learning English (Zhou, 2011). Students learn in a variety of methods in various contexts, which might have an impact on their English proficiency. It becomes one of the most significant factors to consider when deciding on an effective teaching method. Each teacher in a different area may teach English in their own different method. As a consequence, this is significant to learn about the application of teaching methods from many contexts that can be valuable for English teachers in other areas.

Based on the premise that many pupils, the majority of whom are from Indonesia's rural areas, continue to struggle with studying English and mastering the four English skills in schools. As a result, the goal of this research is to discover successful teaching methods in a variety of settings. In addition, it is intended that it will broaden the understanding of instructors in several fields, particularly English teachers.

This research attempts to determine the most successful technique of teaching English, how these effective methods can increase students' English skills, and the most appropriate method of teaching English, particularly in schools in rural areas with limited educational resources. There has been limited research on English teachers' perceptions of effective methods of teaching English as a foreign language in Indonesia, with the majority of studies focusing on schools in rural areas with very few facilities. Therefore, the findings of this study are expected to be useful to teachers, teacher trainers, policymakers, curriculum developers, and teacher candidates in Indonesia and other countries. They can also contribute to increasing knowledge in the use of effective English teaching methods and can be used in analyzing teacher needs in rural areas.

The following are some of the questions that need to be answered in this study: What are the perceptions of English teachers about effective English teaching in rural schools? How can these effective language teaching methods improve students' English skills? What are the most effective methods of teaching English in rural schools?

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **English Teaching Method**

Teacher perspectives on effective teaching methods will be obtained to improve the quality of teaching. For example, effective foreign language teachers must be more communicative while teaching English and indirectly correct students' mistakes by providing decent direction based on the student's culture (Demiroz & Yesilyurt, 2015). Their research used a survey sampling approach to collect the opinions of prospective English teachers in Turkey about the characteristics of an effective foreign language teacher, focusing exclusively on the characteristics of effective teachers.

Furthermore, (Aliasin et al., 2019) analyzed the relationship between teachers' perceptions of English as a foreign language with a focus on task-based language teaching and their dominant teaching style in Iran using a questionnaire. This study found that the teacher's perception was a predictor of the dominant teaching style. They argue that convincing congruence and correspondence should be built within the framework of the teacher's theory/approach/method and beliefs. However, this study only examines one method of teaching English and has not focused on schools located in rural areas.

#### **Different Perceptions Between Teacher and Student**

In addition, there are differences in perceptions between teachers and students about English teachers can help in determining effective teaching methods. (Park & Lee, 2006) have tried to investigate teacher and student perceptions of Korean secondary schools. They found that there was a big difference between teachers' perceptions and their students' perceptions which could lead to students' rejection of the teaching methods and approaches used by their teachers, which could lead to ineffectiveness in their learning. However, this study did not focus on schools located in rural areas and only used a questionnaire to collect data.

Furthermore, (Liando, 2015) found that the best teachers must have a personal attitude and good academic knowledge. Attitudes include being kind, friendly, patient, and fair, while academic elements such as making courses more interesting and challenging students academically. He analyzed the perspectives of lecturers and students from one of the public universities in Indonesia about the characteristics of the best teachers in English as a foreign language class. This research focuses on the character of a good teacher by not delving deeper into effective methods of teaching English as an effective foreign language.

#### **Different Perception**

In order to find the differences between the two contexts of teaching English as a foreign language, (Lehmann & Weber, 2015) conducted a comparative study between the perspectives of English teachers in Chile and Germany regarding their teaching methods. They found that teachers made less use of interlingual communication tasks and less use of useful texts to develop communicative competence. In addition, (Wang & Renandya, 2012) explore teachers' perspectives on effective approaches to improving students' listening skills in China. They found several effective approaches in the learning process to improve student skills better implemented by teachers, such as; providing listening

exercises, pronunciation instructions, activities that make students accustomed to listening to English intonation, repeated listening, dictation, and verification after a lot of listening. They argue that the learning process from the most basic level should be handled properly to help English learners build a solid linguistic foundation before they move on to improve their listening skills to a higher level. Both of these studies sought to find out about effective English teaching methods, using only questionnaires and not focusing on schools in rural areas.

#### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to acquire a deeper understanding, this study employs a combination of methods rather than relying solely on one (Ary et al., 2010; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Mertens, 2010; Mills, Geoffrey; Gay, 2019). The data for this study was collected through interviews with high school English teachers on the island of Timor, in the province of East Nusa Tenggara.

# **Participants**

The participants in this study were high school (SMA) English teachers who served in a remote area of East Nusa Tenggara province on the island of Timor from four districts; Malaka, Kupang, Timor Tengah Utara, and Timor Tengah Selatan. A total of 26 people met the criteria to be included as participants out of 33 teachers who completed the questionnaire. English teachers who have been teaching English for at least three years are able to provide a great deal of information about their experience when using effective teaching methods that are also determined to have sufficient teaching experience; an active English teacher from a rural senior high school in East Nusa Tenggara Province on the island of Timor; In recent years, the school where they teach has won an English competition award, or a student has received the top score in the National Examination. Participants ranged in age from 20 to 60 years of age, with more than three years of teaching experience.

The researcher contacted the Education and Culture Office of East Nusa Tenggara Province to obtain initial data matching the above criteria. After being selected using the criteria, the researcher sends a letter of request for willingness to be a participant, which will be sent to schools that meet these criteria. After the application letter was approved, then a face-to-face interview with the teacher was held, explaining the purpose of the study and confirmation of consent to become a participant, and all participants will be given a questionnaire to fill out.

#### **Data Collection**

Quantitative data was collected using a widely used questionnaire in language learning research to determine participants' beliefs and motivation regarding teaching methods (Mackey & Gass, 2005). After obtaining the agreement of the participants who have been chosen. They were advised that participation was entirely up to them. The participants were then given questionnaires in Indonesian to be filled out. Before the questionnaire was filled out, an explanation of how to complete it was given. Participants were also given contact information so that they may be reached for clarification or

communication. Finally, questionnaires were distributed to each school on the list based on the criteria provided by the coordinator of the school supervisor.

Qualitative data were collected using semi-structured interviews conducted with 8 participants to gain a deeper understanding of issues that might not be uncovered using the questionnaire alone (Mills, Geoffrey; Gay, 2019). In addition, teachers were invited to participate in face-to-face interviews held in their respective offices. Interviews last from 25 to 35 minutes. Interviews were conducted in Indonesian, which is the national language that participants and researchers can understand to avoid misunderstandings, and interviews were conducted according to the participants' time availability so as not to interfere with their activities.

The interviewer started the interview by introducing himself and conveying the purpose or objectives of the study, and the terms used in the study were explained to the participants. During the interview, the interviewer spoke less so he could listen more to allow the participants to express their perceptions. The interviewed teachers were told they had the right to withdraw at any time without penalty. The researcher also explained to the respondents that they could choose not to answer questions that made them uncomfortable. All interview questions were in the form of open-ended questions, and the interviews were recorded with a voice recorder and recorded. The interviewee reviewed the interview results to ensure the accuracy of the data. The researcher analyzed the interview data to find out teachers' perceptions about the application of effective methods in teaching English as a foreign language and how these methods can improve students' English skills.

#### **Instrument**

The questionnaire used contained questions about the background of the participants, such as name, age, gender, school origin, and a list of names of English teaching methods which were given the option of ineffective, effective, and most effective.

#### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted in four districts; Kupang, Timor Tengah Utara, Timor Tengah Selatan, and Malaka, which are all located on the island of Timor, East Nusa Tenggara province. The total number of participants is 26 people, the details of which can be seen in the figures below.

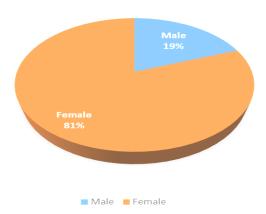


Figure 1. Participants' gender



Figure 2. Participants' age



Figure 3. Teachers' achievement

It can be seen in the charts above that the total number of participants who met the criteria was 26 people consisting of 19% men and 81% women. The age of the participants varied with the details 15 % aged 20-30 years, 58 % aged 31-40 years, 23 % aged 41-50 years, and only 4 % aged 51-60 years. Among all participants, only 23% received awards for teacher and student achievements in English competitions (Debating, Speech, etcetera) and teacher's academic achievements.

It can be said that most teachers who meet the criteria of productive age are 31-40 years. Answer the first and third questions regarding the most effective English teaching methods applied in schools that were located in rural areas can be seen in the following graph:

# **English Teaching Methods**

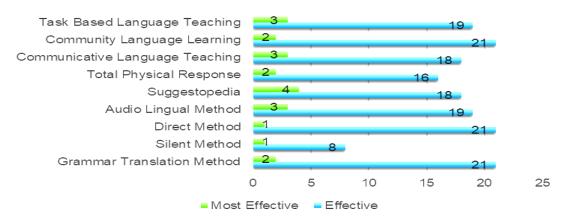


Figure 4. The most effective method

From the graph above, it can be seen that the most effective method chosen by the teachers was the Suggestopedia with a total of 4 voters, followed by Audio Lingual Method, Communicative Language Teaching, and Task-Based Language Teaching with 3 voters per method. Therefore, it is clear that Suggestopedia is the most effective method in teaching English in rural schools, according to the teacher.

To answer the second question regarding how the teaching method that English teachers chose as an effective method in teaching English, the researchers recruited 8 (eight) participants to be interviewed after they filled out the distributed questionnaires. They were selected based on criteria, including they must have taught for more than 3 years, have received awards both as teachers and students they teach, and their schools are located in rural areas.

Based on the research findings, in general, there are 4 (four) methods that are considered effective in the teaching-learning process. These methods are implemented by most English teachers in rural schools on the island of Timor, which are:

### 1. Audio Lingual Method

The findings show that many teachers in rural schools on the island of Timor use the Audio Lingual Method. They believe this method effectively teaches English material to their students using the hearing sense. Usually, students are invited to listen to English material spoken by both the teacher and native speakers from the audio record. This can be seen from the information of participant number 1 (one), who teaches a listening skill. This teacher admits that his students will understand better when they hear some types of English songs that they like. The teacher stated that "...I usually ask their favourite song first, then proceed with the material I want to explain. Students prefer to listen to their favourite song or oration in English. Basically, it's something they can hear about imitating. Sometimes in class, we practice singing their favourite song, finding out the meaning first. Usually, I give 30 minutes to understand the meaning of the song before the presentation of the material for the day ".

# 2. Community Language Learning

The findings both through questionnaires and interviews showed that participants number 2 and 4 argued that the most effective method for teaching in rural schools

was using the Community Language Teaching method on the grounds that it could build communication between teachers and students and make students interested in the material presented. by the teacher. When students are interested in the material, the teacher can use various strategies in the learning process. These teachers think, "... in rural areas in general, I will explain first, the basic or foundation of English is lacking, so what I want here is to use the community language learning method. For me, the first thing before starting a class is the closeness of teachers and students. After there is a good relationship between students and teachers, only then will there be a sense of pleasure in learning and happiness with the subject teacher. Then we check when they are happy to learn for sure the material that has been given, and we will try our best to absorb it. So I built the proximity factor not only in the classroom but outside the classroom as well or anywhere after that the children were close to us, until in the classroom in teaching and learning then I tried to guide them with the existing closeness capital that, continues to guide them to be able to absorb the material that has been given. So this capital already exists. In class, we just need to direct it according to what strategy we want to use."

Aside from that, they explained how they employed nature and the environment around students in the learning process. Students were required to come up with basic English examples of what they see in their daily lives. For some teachers in rural Timor, this has been observed to be particularly beneficial.

#### 3. Grammar-Translation Method

Teachers frequently employ the Grammar-Translation Method, which has been found to be quite effective in rural schools. According to the teacher, in addition to employing body gestures to teach students, they are also expected to use English grammar that has been translated into Indonesian to make it more understandable. Students are instructed to learn English words and sentences using proper grammar. When students are late, they are also given a "penalty" for learning words, being able to make sentences, and searching for translations. Participant number five (5) stated that being able to employ this strategy in class was enjoyable. This participant stated, "...I usually use this method by asking them for a day to memorize at least 5 words. Then, I usually ask students who are sometimes late to say 2 or 4 words in English and make them into sentences according to English grammar. After that, in teaching, I also used to ask students to translate Indonesian into English or vice versa. To understand better, I use everyday language and body movements, because here the knowledge of English is very lacking, what's more, in the villages they use the local language more often, at school they sometimes use the local language. That is why the translation will make it easier for them to learn."

In addition, participant three (3) also chose to use this method because it was considered quite effective for students in class. "... when I teach reading, what I usually do is read, so that they know what they are reading, then just tell them to read. Although not all text or paragraphs, maybe 2 people 1 get 1 paragraph. If it's already fluent, I ask them to read the slightly more difficult reading. Sometimes I shuffled words. They had to work a bit; first, I made a sentence with the words cut out and put

it in a box, so they took it and pasted it on the board. I try to make 1 sentence first, so briefly 5 words. Then, the 5 people who got it, they tried to say, who should be standing first, arranged into 1 sentence," he said.

# 4. Total Physical Response

Some teachers use the Total Physical Response method so that the students they teach directly experience what they are learning through physical movements. Usually, the teacher gives an example for students to follow and practice with their friends. The findings showed that participant 6 chose this method so that he could interact with the students in the class. He explained, "Children like to practice in front of the class, and I also prefer it if the children are present in class, so that's my experience when teaching in front, yes, children present conversational dialogues like that or, for example, if I want to use a stimulus in front, I can mime, and they/you can guess, what that means so that they are easier to remember. In addition, I asked other students to demonstrate what they were learning, such as mentioning the members of the body and having them hold the body part that they mentioned."

In addition, several participants stated that sometimes they combine the teaching methods to teach several different English skills, such as speaking and writing. As participant 6 explained, "I combine some methods to teach several different skills in one meeting, for example, Suggestopedia and Grammar-Translation methods".

Most of the participants are facing various challenges in applying the teaching methods above, including limited learning media, the absence of electricity and internet networks in schools, and several others, all of which must be rationalized when teachers use these methods. Participant 1 uttered, "it is difficult to apply the methods properly because of limited access to the internet and learning media because we live far from the city....the electricity is often blacked out so we cannot use video or even just tape record" he added.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of the discussion above, it can be concluded that according to English teachers, there are various effective English teaching methods that can be used in teaching English in schools located in rural areas of the island of Timor. Teachers often use methods in teaching English to students in rural schools, including Task-Based Language Teaching, Community Language Learning, Communicative Language Teaching, Total Physical Response, Suggestopedia, Audio Lingual Method, Direct Method, and Silent Method, and Grammar Translation Method. Each method was used based on the student's needs and is considered effective by the teacher. Of these methods, the most effective method used by teachers in schools based on questionnaires is Suggestopedia, chosen by most teachers, followed by Audio Lingual Method, Communicative Language Teaching, and Task-Based Language Teaching teachers. However, the limitations of learning media and inadequate electricity and internet network connections forced the teachers to adapt to the conditions.

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