

## Teachers' Perceptions of the Role of the Teacher Working Group (KKG) in Developing Enjoyable and Interactive English Learning in Elementary Schools: A Descriptive Qualitative Study

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### ABSTRACT

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan persepsi guru mengenai peran Kelompok Kerja Guru (KKG) dalam pengembangan pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris yang menyenangkan dan interaktif di Sekolah Dasar. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan data diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam terhadap dua puluh guru yang tergabung dalam KKG SD Rayon 1 Kecamatan Jaro. Analisis data dilakukan secara tematik untuk mengidentifikasi pengalaman, strategi, media pembelajaran, dan tantangan yang dihadapi guru dalam menciptakan pembelajaran yang menarik bagi siswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru menyadari pentingnya pembelajaran yang menyenangkan untuk meningkatkan motivasi dan partisipasi siswa. KKG berperan sebagai sarana peningkatan kompetensi melalui diskusi, berbagi praktik, dan pelatihan terkait metode interaktif seperti TPR, storytelling, dan permainan edukatif. Kendala yang muncul mencakup keterbatasan fasilitas, media, dan kemampuan digital guru. Temuan ini menekankan bahwa dukungan KKG dapat memperkuat praktik pembelajaran inovatif dan interaktif, sekaligus menjadi masukan bagi pengembangan program pelatihan guru di masa depan.

This study aims to describe teachers' perceptions of the role of the Teacher Working Group (Kelompok Kerja Guru/KKG) in developing enjoyable and interactive English language learning at the elementary school level. The study employed a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through in-depth interviews with twenty teachers who are members of KKG SD Rayon 1, Jaro Subdistrict. The data were analyzed thematically to identify teachers' experiences, instructional strategies, learning media, and the challenges they face in creating engaging learning environments for students. The findings indicate that teachers recognize the importance of enjoyable learning in enhancing students' motivation and participation. The KKG functions as a platform for professional development through discussions, sharing of best practices, and training on interactive methods such as Total Physical Response (TPR), storytelling, and educational games. The challenges identified include limited facilities, instructional media, and teachers' digital competencies. These findings highlight that the support provided by the KKG can strengthen innovative and interactive teaching practices, while also offering insights for the future development of teacher training programs.



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### INTRODUCTION

English language learning in elementary schools (SD) plays a strategic role in building a foundation for foreign language proficiency from an early age. At the developmental stage of elementary school children, enjoyable and interactive learning processes are key factors in fostering students'

motivation and self-confidence in using a foreign language, particularly English. Learning that focuses solely on vocabulary memorization and grammatical structures tends to be less effective in developing authentic communication skills.

In addition to developing children's communication skills, attention must also be given to fostering their cognitive and affective development. English instruction oriented toward activity-based approaches—such as games, songs, movement, and storytelling—is considered more appropriate for children's cognitive and affective developmental characteristics (Shin & Crandall, 2019; Garton & Copland, 2020).

Globally, based on the theory of Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL), researchers emphasize the importance of experiential learning and social interaction. Children can learn English through meaningful contexts, physical activities, and positive emotional engagement. Therefore, teachers are required to possess adequate pedagogical competence in designing varied, creative, and contextual learning experiences. However, various studies indicate that elementary school teachers still face challenges and difficulties in implementing enjoyable and interactive English teaching strategies, particularly due to limitations in professional training, learning facilities, and digital literacy (Copland, Garton, & Mann, 2020; Farrell & Ives, 2019).

In Indonesia, changes in educational policy have also influenced English teaching practices in elementary schools. Although English is not always a compulsory subject in the national curriculum, many schools continue to offer it as a local content subject or enrichment program. This condition requires teachers to be well-prepared to design effective instruction that aligns with students' characteristics. In this context, the role of teacher learning communities such as the Teacher Working Group (*Kelompok Kerja Guru/KKG*), becomes highly important. KKG serves as a professional collaboration forum that enables teachers to share experiences, discuss instructional challenges, and collectively develop innovative strategies.

The concept of a Professional Learning Community (PLC) emphasizes the importance of collaboration and collective reflection in improving teaching quality. Recent studies show that active teacher learning communities can enhance pedagogical competence, creativity in the use of instructional media, and teachers' confidence in implementing interactive methods (Admiraal et al., 2019; Hairoon & Tan, 2020).

In the context of English teaching in elementary schools, forums such as KKG can become strategic spaces to learn and practice methods such as Total Physical Response (TPR), storytelling, educational games, and the integration of simple technology into instruction. On the other hand, the effectiveness of KKG in supporting the development of enjoyable English learning still depends on various factors, such as active member participation, policy support, and resource availability. Some studies indicate that although KKG forums have been established, their implementation has not been optimal in promoting sustainable instructional innovation (Saito et al., 2019). Therefore, it is important to explore teachers' perceptions of the role of KKG in helping them develop engaging and interactive English learning.

This study focuses on the perceptions of teachers who are members of KKG SD Rayon 1, Jaro District, regarding KKG's contribution to the development of enjoyable English learning. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this study is expected to provide an in-depth description of teachers' experiences, strategies employed, instructional media developed, and challenges encountered in daily teaching practices.

Based on this background, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1. How do teachers perceive the role of KKG in developing enjoyable and interactive English learning in elementary schools?
2. What teaching strategies and methods are developed by teachers through KKG activities?
3. What challenges do teachers face in creating engaging English learning for students?

This study aims to describe teachers' perceptions of KKG's role in developing enjoyable and interactive English learning, to identify the strategies, methods, and instructional media developed through KKG activities, and to analyse the challenges teachers face in implementing innovative English instruction in elementary schools. Through this study, it is expected to enrich discussions on teacher professional development through learning communities, particularly in the context of English teaching at the elementary level. Furthermore, this study may serve as a reference for developing theories regarding the role of communities of practice in improving instructional quality.

Practically, the results of this study may serve as evaluation and reflection material for KKG in designing more relevant and applicable training programs, provide input for educational policymakers in strengthening support for teacher learning communities, and inspire teachers to develop more creative and interactive English teaching strategies.

In teaching English, children require different approaches compared to adolescents or adults. Children have unique learning characteristics, such as the need for physical activity, the use of imagination, and emotional engagement (Shin & Crandall, 2019). Therefore, methods such as Total Physical Response (TPR), storytelling, songs, and educational games are effective strategies to enhance student participation (Garton & Copland, 2020).

Furthermore, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach emphasizes language use in real contexts and social interaction. Studies show that interaction-based learning can significantly increase students' motivation and communicative competence (Farrell & Ives, 2019). Joyful learning contributes to the enhancement of students' intrinsic motivation. According to motivation theory in language education, a positive and supportive classroom atmosphere can increase student engagement in learning activities (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017). Interactivity in learning also plays an important role in developing communication competence and cooperation among students.

The concept of a Professional Learning Community (PLC) emphasizes collaboration, reflection, and continuous improvement in teaching practices. Research indicates that effective teacher learning communities can enhance instructional quality and student learning outcomes (Admiraal et al., 2019). Moreover, participation in professional communities encourages teachers to share best practices and develop instructional innovations (Hairon & Tan, 2020). KKG functions as a forum for developing teachers' competencies through regular discussions, training, and experience sharing. When managed optimally, KKG can serve as a strategic means of supporting the implementation of creative and interactive English teaching methods.

Enjoyable and interactive English learning in elementary schools is an urgent necessity in facing the challenges of globalization and technological advancement. Teachers play a central role in creating engaging and meaningful learning environments for students. However, the successful implementation of innovative instruction is strongly influenced by continuous professional development support. The Teacher Working Group (KKG), as a professional learning community, has great potential to enhance teachers' competencies through collaboration, discussion, and training in interactive methods. Therefore, it is essential to understand teachers' perceptions of KKG's role in supporting the development of enjoyable English learning. The results of this study are expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to strengthening teacher professional development programs in the future.

## METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to explore in depth teachers' perceptions regarding the role of the Teacher Working Group (*Kelompok Kerja Guru/KKG*) in developing enjoyable and interactive English learning in elementary schools. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for the contextual exploration of meanings, experiences, and perspectives of participants in natural settings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The descriptive design aims to provide a systematic account of the phenomenon under investigation without manipulating variables (Colorafi & Evans, 2016).

The study was conducted among members of KKG SD Rayon 1, Jaro District, involving 20 elementary school teachers who currently teach or have previously taught English. Participants were selected using purposive sampling with the following criteria: (1) active participation in KKG activities, (2) involvement in English teaching at the elementary school level, and (3) willingness to serve as research informants.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews to obtain in-depth yet focused information. Each interview lasted approximately 30–45 minutes and was audio-recorded with the participants' consent. The interview guide consisted of 18 questions categorized according to the research focus, as follows:

1. Understanding of enjoyable and interactive learning (3 questions)
2. Teaching experiences and practices (3 questions)
3. Teaching strategies and methods (3 questions)

4. Use of instructional media (3 questions)
5. Obstacles and challenges (3 questions)
6. Support and expectations regarding KKG (3 questions)

Semi-structured interviews were selected because they provide flexibility for participants to explain their experiences reflectively while maintaining consistency with the research focus (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Data were analysed using thematic analysis following the stages proposed by Braun and Clarke (2021): (1) verbatim transcription, (2) repeated reading to gain familiarity with the data, (3) initial coding, (4) grouping codes into themes, (5) reviewing and naming themes, and (6) drawing conclusions. The emerging themes were then aligned with the research questions, such as teachers' perceptions of enjoyable learning, the practice of interactive methods, instructional challenges, and the role of KKG in professional development.

To ensure credibility and validity, this study applied several strategies:

1. Source triangulation by comparing responses among participants.
2. Member checking through confirmation of interview results with participants.
3. An audit trail documenting the processes of data collection and analysis.

These procedures are essential in qualitative research to ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings (Nowell et al., 2017). Ethical principles were observed, including obtaining informed consent, maintaining participants' confidentiality, and using the data solely for academic purposes.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted with 20 elementary school teachers to explore their perceptions and experiences regarding enjoyable and interactive English learning through the activities of the Teacher Working Group (KKG) Rayon 1, Jaro District. Data were collected through in-depth interviews consisting of 18 questions covering perceptions, strategies, instructional media, teaching experiences, challenges, and expectations for professional development.

### Teachers' Perceptions of Enjoyable and Interactive English Learning

Based on the interviews, most teachers understood that enjoyable and interactive English learning makes students active, comfortable, and motivated. For example, *respondent A15/SD02* stated:

*"Pembelajaran bahasa Inggris yang menyenangkan dan interaktif adalah pembelajaran yang membuat siswa aktif, nyaman, dan termotivasi melalui kegiatan variatif seperti games, role-play, diskusi, lagu, dan media menarik sehingga siswa terlibat langsung dalam penggunaan bahasa secara komunikatif."*

Other teachers emphasized the importance of game-based approaches, storytelling, and the use of visual media (*respondent A16/SD07*), in line with the theories of Total Physical Response (TPR), storytelling, and joyful learning, which stress students' physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement (Shin & Crandall, 2019; Dornyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017).

### Reasons Why English Learning Needs to Be Enjoyable

Teachers expressed that enjoyable learning increases students' interest, intrinsic motivation, and confidence in using English. For instance, *respondent A07/SD04* stated:

*"Pembelajaran bahasa Inggris ini bisa menimbulkan kecemasan, sehingga pembelajaran menyenangkan untuk mengurangi rasa takut anak terhadap kesalahan dalam belajar baik mengucapkan maupun menulis."*

This finding supports Dornyei and Al-Hoorie (2017), who argue that a positive and supportive classroom environment enhances student engagement and motivation. Furthermore, elementary school students require concrete and interactive activities that match their learning characteristics (Garton & Copland, 2020; Farrell & Ives, 2019).

### Teaching Strategies and Methods Used by Teachers

The data show that teachers developed various strategies through KKG activities, including:

1. Games and role-play: used to increase active participation (*respondent A15/SD03*).
2. Storytelling and songs: facilitating vocabulary retention, structure acquisition, and pronunciation (*respondent A16/SD07*).
3. Total Physical Response (TPR): combining movement commands with English vocabulary and phrases (*respondent A08/SD01*).
4. Visual and digital media: such as flashcards, videos, and interactive quizzes (*respondents A07/SD04* and *A15/SD03*).

These methods align with the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, which emphasizes social interaction and language use in authentic contexts (Farrell & Ives, 2019). KKG plays an important role as a professional community that encourages teachers to share best practices and instructional innovations (Hairon & Tan, 2020; Admiraal et al., 2019).

### **Instructional Media**

Teachers used concrete, visual, and digital media to support interactivity. For example, *respondent A01/SD01* used pictures and real objects, while *respondent A02/SD02* utilized videos and songs. *Respondent A16/SD07* emphasized the importance of media that stimulate multiple senses simultaneously (visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic). These findings are consistent with theories of teaching young learners, which highlight the importance of multisensory approaches in elementary English instruction (Shin & Crandall, 2019).

### **Teachers' Challenges**

Teachers faced several challenges in creating enjoyable learning, including limited instructional time, insufficient facilities, limited English proficiency, and variations in students' abilities. For example, *respondent A08/SD01* stated:

*"Kendala waktu yang masih terbatas karena Bahasa Inggris di SD hanya 2 JP perminggu."*

This indicates the need for continuous professional support through KKG to help teachers overcome these limitations, as emphasized in Professional Learning Community (PLC) theory, which highlights collaboration and ongoing reflection (Admiraal et al., 2019).

### **Teachers' Expectations and Training Needs**

Teachers expressed hopes that KKG would provide interactive, practice-based training and workshops on the use of digital media to improve English teaching competence. For example, *respondent A15/SD03* stated:

*"Saya ingin pelatihan yang praktik langsung, berbasis media digital, dan memberikan contoh kegiatan pembelajaran yang bisa langsung diterapkan di kelas."*

This implies that KKG should not function merely as an administrative forum but should transform into a community of practice that promotes instructional innovation (Hairon & Tan, 2020).

The findings indicate that KKG plays a significant role in supporting teacher competence development, particularly in enjoyable and interactive English learning. Teachers' perceptions align with the theories of TPR, storytelling, and CLT, which emphasize student engagement through direct experience, social interaction, and creative media use (Shin & Crandall, 2019; Farrell & Ives, 2019; Dornyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017).

The various strategies developed through KKG reflect the implementation of best practices within a Professional Learning Community (PLC). By sharing experiences and resources, teachers can design more effective instruction, overcome media limitations, and adapt methods to elementary students' characteristics (Admiraal et al., 2019; Hairon & Tan, 2020).

Teachers' challenges, such as limited time, language proficiency, and facilities, underscore the need for continuous training. The ideal training model should be practice-based, incorporate digital media use, and integrate interactive strategies so that teachers have ready-to-use tools for classroom implementation, as expressed by *respondent A16/SD07*.

### **Theoretical Implications**

1. Reinforces the importance of teacher learning communities (KKG) as PLCs for continuous professional development.
2. Supports joyful learning and CLT theories in the context of elementary English instruction.
3. Emphasizes the relevance of multisensory methods (TPR, storytelling, songs, and games) for children's cognitive, social, and emotional development.

### **Practical Implications**

1. KKG can design practice-based and digital media-oriented training programs to enhance teacher competence.
2. Schools can improve facilities and instructional media to support interactive learning.
3. Teachers are encouraged to integrate creative methods, multimedia tools, and participatory strategies to make learning more enjoyable and effective.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of this study regarding teachers' perceptions of the role of the Teacher Working Group (*Kelompok Kerja Guru/KKG*) in developing enjoyable and interactive English learning in elementary schools, several conclusions can be drawn.

First, regarding teachers' perceptions of enjoyable and interactive learning, teachers understand that enjoyable and interactive English instruction actively engages students, makes them feel comfortable, and motivates them through varied activities such as games, storytelling, role-play, songs, and the use of visual or digital media. Such activities can foster students' interest in learning, encourage them to take risks in using the language, and facilitate natural language acquisition (Dornyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017; Shin & Crandall, 2019).

Second, concerning the strategies and methods developed through KKG, teachers employ various creative approaches appropriate to elementary school students' characteristics, such as Total Physical Response (TPR), storytelling, educational games, role-play, and Project-Based Learning (PBL). Furthermore, KKG serves as a platform for sharing best practices, creative ideas, and the development of interactive teaching methods, enabling teachers to become more confident and skilled in implementing these strategies in the classroom (Admiraal et al., 2019; Hairon & Tan, 2020).

Third, regarding the challenges teachers face in creating enjoyable learning, the main obstacles include limited facilities and instructional media, restricted instructional time, differences in students' abilities, limited English proficiency among teachers, and classroom management issues. These findings indicate that although teachers possess motivation and strategies, support from schools and continuous professional development programs remains essential to overcome these barriers (Farrell & Ives, 2019; Garton & Copland, 2020).

Regarding the role of KKG in teacher competency development, KKG plays an important role as a professional learning community that facilitates training, discussion, and collaborative practice. Teachers expect KKG activities to be conducted more frequently and to focus on hands-on practice, the development of creative instructional media, the integration of digital technology, and the improvement of teachers' English proficiency. Therefore, KKG has significant potential to enhance the quality of English instruction in elementary schools.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

For Teachers:

1. Optimize enjoyable and interactive teaching methods by integrating TPR, storytelling, games, and digital media in accordance with elementary students' characteristics.
2. Actively participate in KKG activities and utilize every training session or discussion to develop creative strategies while sharing best practices with colleagues.
3. Adjust the use of media and instructional strategies to students' needs, interests, and abilities to ensure more effective learning.

For Future Researchers:

1. Future studies may expand the sample to other schools in different regions to examine variations in teachers' perceptions regarding KKG and English instruction.
2. It is recommended to investigate the relationship between KKG training and improvements in student learning outcomes to obtain more concrete empirical evidence.
3. Longitudinal studies may be conducted to examine the long-term impact of KKG on teacher competence and student motivation.

For Readers and Educational Policymakers:

1. Provide greater support for KKG, including English language training, the provision of interactive instructional media, and the enhancement of digital facilities in elementary schools.
2. Develop policies that encourage regular teacher collaboration within professional learning communities so that teachers remain motivated to enhance their competencies and instructional innovation in the classroom.

With these conclusions and recommendations, it is expected that English instruction at the elementary level will become increasingly enjoyable, interactive, and effective, and that the role of KKG will be further optimized in strengthening teacher professionalism.

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