

Integrated Skills Approach in Elementary EFL Classrooms: Teachers' Perceptions and Implementation Practices

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ABSTRACT

Integrated skills instruction is widely recommended for EFL classrooms, yet elementary English teaching in Indonesia often remains segregated. This study investigates how elementary EFL teachers perceive the Integrated Skills Approach (ISA), implement it in classroom planning, and what type of integration they use. A qualitative case study was conducted at SD Mutiara Bangsa 2, Tangerang City, involving three English teachers with over seven years of experience. Data were collected through interviews, questionnaires, and lesson-plan documentation, then analyzed descriptively and thematically. The findings indicate that teachers perceived ISA positively as an approach that improves communicative competence, activates classroom interaction, and reduces monotonous instruction. However, implementation was not simultaneous; teachers sequenced the four skills within 80-minute lessons, prioritizing spoken skills before written skills and using one skill as the main target. Lesson-plan analysis confirmed that complex task-based integration was the dominant model. This study contributes empirical evidence on teacher-mediated ISA implementation in Indonesian elementary EFL contexts and highlights the need for clearer textbook support, richer listening resources, and explicit teacher training on integrated-skill lesson design.

INTRODUCTION

English occupies a significant position in Indonesian education because it functions as an international language and a practical medium for wider communication. In the Indonesian school context, English is generally learned as a foreign language rather than as a second language, and the classroom remains the most structured environment in which students encounter systematic English instruction. This condition makes school-based English teaching especially important because learners require guided exposure to the language before they can use it meaningfully beyond the classroom. At the elementary level, the teaching of English is also linked to early language familiarization, vocabulary development, confidence building, and the formation of basic communicative habits.

A central issue in English language learning is the relationship among the four macro-skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Harmer (2007) argues that these four skills form the core of English learning and should be mastered by students as complementary abilities. Reading helps learners expand vocabulary, access information, and build background knowledge; writing allows them to express ideas through structured sentences and texts; listening enables them to process spoken input; and speaking allows them to participate in interpersonal communication. In classroom practice, however, these skills are often presented separately. Segregated-skill instruction may appear efficient because one lesson can focus on one target skill, yet such organization does not fully reflect how language operates in real communication.

The Integrated Skills Approach (ISA) addresses this limitation by connecting listening, speaking, reading, and writing within meaningful classroom activities. Oxford (2001) defines integrated skills instruction as an approach that interconnects the four primary language skills in order to optimize communication in ESL and EFL learning. This view is consistent with the broader argument that language competence is not built through isolated mechanical practice alone. Students commonly need to listen before responding orally, read before producing written answers, and discuss ideas before composing texts. As a result, integration is not merely a methodological option but a pedagogical response to the communicative nature of language.

Despite this theoretical relevance, ISA is not always implemented explicitly in Indonesian elementary EFL classrooms. The preliminary research data underlying this article show that teachers often face a curriculum and textbook environment where skill integration is not clearly stated. Lesson plans may identify a dominant skill, and textbooks may present activities in a way that makes teachers feel more comfortable teaching one skill at a time. The original study identified five practical issues: students need mastery of the four skills; segregated-skill teaching is still used; integrated-skill teaching is sometimes assumed to be difficult to deliver simultaneously; segregated-skill teaching is considered more efficient; and integrated skills are not always written clearly in textbooks.

The Integrated Skills Approach is grounded in the assumption that language learning should approximate authentic communication. Oxford (2001) explains that integrated skills

instruction connects listening, speaking, reading, and writing while also involving grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, usage, spelling, syntax, and semantics. Under this view, the four skills are not treated as independent compartments but as mutually reinforcing channels of communication. ISA is commonly associated with two broad instructional orientations: content-based language instruction, in which language is learned through subject-matter content, and task-based language instruction, in which learners use language to accomplish meaningful tasks.

Tolstykh and Khomutova (2012) similarly describe integrated skills as a creative combination of discrete language skills in classroom delivery. Importantly, integration does not always mean that each skill appears with equal weight. A lesson may foreground one skill, such as reading, while indirectly activating speaking, listening, or writing through discussion, clarification, and written response. This point is especially relevant to elementary classrooms where teachers must manage time, learner readiness, classroom control, and textbook requirements. In such settings, integration may be more realistic when it is designed as a sequence of related tasks.

Pardede (2019) argues that ISA can increase learners' ability to communicate in English and use the language beyond the classroom. This argument reflects the communicative orientation of ISA: students are not only expected to learn English as a school subject but also to use it as a tool for meaning-making. When learners read a text, discuss its content, listen to teacher input, and produce written or oral responses, they experience English as a social and functional language system. Such experience is essential in EFL contexts because learners often have limited opportunities to use English outside formal instruction.

Furthermore, Teaching the four skills in EFL contexts requires attention to the relationship between classroom activities and communicative competence. Hinkel (2010), Kurniasih (2011), and Pardede (2019) emphasize that language skills should not be isolated when the learning goal is communicative proficiency. For elementary learners, integrated skill teaching can provide a path from controlled exposure to meaningful use. For instance, listening to teacher modeling can support pronunciation; reading aloud can support speaking fluency; and writing short responses can consolidate vocabulary and grammar learned through reading.

Zokhirovna (2019) identifies activity-based training and communicative education as strategies for teaching the four language skills. These strategies require students to participate actively rather than remain passive receivers of teacher explanation. In a similar communicative tradition, Hymes, as cited in Tavit (2010), underlines the need for learners to use language in ways that match communicative goals. This perspective implies that skill teaching should be organized around meaningful language functions, such as asking questions, sharing experiences, responding to instructions, and presenting information.

The integration of skills also benefits teachers. Oxford (2001) notes that integrated teaching allows teachers to see students' progress in communicative language use, while Galaczi (2018) argues that integrated assessment can provide a more accurate picture of language ability because one skill can be evaluated in relation to another. Although the present study did not focus

on formal assessment design, the teachers' questionnaire responses indicate that assessment was commonly placed at the end of lessons and connected to the main skill taught during the integrated sequence.

In addition, the advantages of integrating language skills include authenticity, continuity, motivation, and confidence building. Gautam (2019), Oxford (2001), and Sadiku (2015) argue that integrated skills expose students to the natural complexity of language and support foreign-language discourse across situations. In real-life communication, speakers rarely use only one skill. A learner may listen to a question, respond orally, read supporting information, and write a brief answer. Integrated learning, therefore, helps students experience English as a connected system of meaning rather than a set of isolated classroom exercises.

Skill integration may occur in simple or complex forms. Simple integration commonly combines two related skills, such as listening and speaking or reading and writing. Liao (2009) states that the performance of one skill cannot be fully separated from other skills, while Nation and Newton (2008) identify conversation as a common activity that combines listening and speaking. Byrne (1986) distinguishes spoken skills, especially listening-speaking, and written skills, especially writing-reading. These pairings are common in EFL classrooms because they fit natural classroom routines such as dialogue practice, reading aloud, dictation, and text-based written exercises.

Complex integration combines the four skills within a broader lesson sequence. Masduqi (2008) argues that receptive and productive skills can be combined productively through discourse, statements, written notes, storytelling, or command-giving. Richards (2008) further explains that spoken skills may function as interaction, transaction, or performance. Meanwhile, Johnson (2008) describes reading and writing as mutually connected because reading increases learners' awareness of vocabulary, grammar, and structure, while writing supports fluency and textual control. These theoretical views support the interpretation of ISA in the present study as a task-based sequence in which one main skill activates other supporting skills.

Beyond the theoretical framework of skill integration, the actual implementation of this approach heavily relies on teacher perception. Teacher perception is crucial because it influences classroom decision-making. Efron (1969) defines perception as the cognitive relationship between people and the things around them, while Bem (1972) connects perception to the philosophy of mind, conceptual antecedents, and empirical consequences. Gibson, as discussed by Michaels and Carello (1981), describes perception as the direct detection of information from the environment. Applied to teaching, perception refers to how teachers understand, interpret, and evaluate an instructional approach based on experience and classroom realities.

In this study, teacher perception is examined because ISA implementation depends heavily on what teachers believe is possible and useful. A teacher who views ISA as impractical may continue to separate skills even when integration is theoretically recommended. Conversely, a teacher who perceives ISA as communicatively valuable may adapt lesson sequences, combine tasks, and connect assessment to integrated activities. Perception is thus linked to

implementation: it shapes the selection of learning objectives, the organization of activities, and the degree to which students are encouraged to use English for communication.

Previous studies have shown that ISA can support language learning at different levels and in different contexts. Aydogan and Akbarov (2014), working with 149 university students in Turkey, found that integrated skills were more appropriate than separated skills for language learning because the components of English development were interrelated. Deneme and Ada (2010) demonstrated that skill integration could be implemented through classroom activities in which reading was linked to speaking, listening to writing, reading to writing, and writing to speaking. These findings suggest that integration can be operationalized through carefully sequenced activities rather than by forcing all skills to appear at the same moment.

Other studies also support the relevance of integrated skills for EFL learning. Sinta (2017) reported that the Direct Method could facilitate integrated-skill teaching for young learners by combining classroom discourse, games, vocabulary, pronunciation, reading, and writing tasks. Tajzad and Ostovar-Namaghi (2014) found that learners perceived ISA positively because it encouraged communicative language use, reduced excessive dependence on single-skill textbook practice, and shifted learning toward a more student-centered paradigm. Tuncay (2014), using feature movies with 100 tertiary EFL learners, further showed that multimedia materials could serve as tools for integrating listening, speaking, reading, and writing in a single instructional sequence.

Although these studies provide strong evidence for ISA, much of the existing discussion emphasizes students' perceptions or instructional interventions. Less attention has been given to how elementary EFL teachers perceive ISA and how they translate it into ordinary lesson planning. This gap is important because teachers mediate the relationship between theory and classroom reality. Their understanding of ISA influences whether integration becomes a coherent learning design or remains an incidental combination of activities. Teacher perception is therefore not a peripheral issue; it shapes the design of learning objectives, the sequence of skills, the selection of classroom tasks, and the assessment focus.

This article aims to examine teachers' perceptions and implementation of ISA in an elementary EFL classroom context. The study is guided by three research questions: how do EFL teachers perceive the Integrated Skills Approach, how do they implement ISA in teaching English, and what kinds of integrated skills do they use in the classroom? By focusing on three experienced teachers at SD Mutiara Bangsa 2 in Tangerang City, this article offers a context-sensitive account of ISA as planned and understood by teachers. The contribution of the study lies in showing that ISA in elementary EFL practice is best understood as sequential, task-based, and teacher-mediated integration rather than as simultaneous delivery of the four skills.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design because the main purpose was to explore teachers' perceptions and classroom implementation practices. Qualitative research is appropriate for understanding people's beliefs, experiences, behaviors, and interactions (Pathak et al., 2013). Aspers and Corte (2019) define qualitative inquiry as a repeated process of generating a new understanding of a phenomenon by identifying significant differences in empirical material and object comprehension. In this study, the phenomenon under investigation was the teachers' understanding and implementation of ISA in elementary EFL teaching.

A single instrumental case study was used because the research focused on one issue within one school context. Case study research allows an intensive investigation of a phenomenon in relation to its setting (Harrison et al., 2017). Yin, as cited in Hancock and Algozzine (2006), views a case study as an empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. The present case was instrumental because SD Mutiara Bangsa 2 provided a bounded setting through which teachers' perceptions and lesson-plan practices could be examined in depth. No treatment was given to teachers or students; the study analyzed existing perceptions, self-reported practices, and planning documents.

Research Location and Time

The research was conducted at SD Mutiara Bangsa 2, a private elementary school located in Benda District, Tangerang City. The school uses the national curriculum and uses English in teaching some subjects. The original fieldwork was conducted across approximately three months in the 2019/2020 academic year. Data collection took place primarily in April, and data analysis was conducted in the following month. The setting was selected because the school employed several English teachers across different grade levels and provided a relevant context for examining ISA in elementary EFL classrooms.

Participants

Three English teachers participated in the study. All were graduates of English education or English departments from different universities and had taught English for more than seven years. Teacher 1 was teaching Grade 5 and had more than nine years of experience in non-formal and formal institutions, including kindergarten and primary education. Teacher 2 was teaching Grade 4 and had more than twenty-four years of experience across primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. Teacher 3 was teaching Grade 6 and had eight years of experience in kindergarten and primary English teaching. These participants were directly involved because they had sustained experience with English instruction at the school.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through interviews, a questionnaire, and documentation.

1 Interviews

Interviews were used to explore teachers' perceptions of ISA in depth. Interviewing is suitable for obtaining the interviewee's description of a phenomenon and for capturing social cues that enrich interpretation (Kvale, as cited in Opdenakker, 2006). Seven interview questions were asked sequentially, focusing on teachers' understanding of integrated learning, the skills they integrate, their reasons and goals, frequency of integration, perceived benefits, and perceived challenges. The interviews were conducted outside teaching time after the participants had finished their classroom duties.

2 Questionnaire

A quasi-structured questionnaire was used to support the interview data and to identify how ISA was implemented in instructional routines. Acharya (2010) defines a questionnaire as a document designed to gather information through written questions. The questionnaire contained four pre-coded yes-or-no questions and five open-ended or multiple-response questions. The items asked whether teachers needed 80 minutes to integrate four skills, whether they informed students about the skill to be learned, whether spoken skills were taught before written skills, whether speaking was taught before listening, what activities were used for each skill, and how often assessments were given at the end of learning.

3 Documentation

Documentation was used to examine lesson plans related to ISA implementation. Lesson plans were selected because they display objectives, learning activities, teacher and learner roles, instructional materials, and assessment practices. The documents included lesson plans for Grades 4, 5, and 6, each allocated 2 × 40 minutes. The Grade 4 and Grade 6 plans emphasized reading aloud, pronunciation, intonation, and response to teacher modeling, while the Grade 5 plan emphasized polite expressions involving "Do you mind..." and "Shall we..." dialogue completion, and performance.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analyzed using descriptive analysis and thematic analysis. The interview data were processed through the three stages of thematic analysis described by Heriyanto (2018): data comprehension, coding, and theme identification. The researcher repeatedly reviewed the interview data, noted important statements, interpreted recurring meanings through coding, and constructed themes related to perception, implementation sequence, and type of integration. Questionnaire results were analyzed descriptively by connecting each response to the next so that the sequence of ISA implementation could be inferred. Documentation was compared with interview and questionnaire findings to strengthen interpretation and improve credibility.

Data Validity and Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of the qualitative findings, this study employed several strategies to establish credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

1 Credibility

Credibility was achieved through three main techniques:

a Methodological Triangulation

Data were collected through three different sources: interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. This triangulation allowed cross-checking of information across methods. For example, teachers' stated perceptions from interviews were compared with their questionnaire responses and lesson plan documentation. Consistent findings across all three sources strengthened the credibility of the interpretations (Creswell, 2018).

b Member Checking

After the initial data analysis, the researcher conducted a member-checking session by returning to the three participants to share preliminary interpretations and summaries of their interview responses. Participants were asked to confirm whether the findings accurately represented their views and classroom practices. This process reduced misinterpretation and ensured that the conclusions reflected the teachers' actual experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). All participants confirmed that the interpretations aligned with their intended meaning.

c Prolonged Engagement

The researcher spent approximately three months in the research setting, allowing sufficient time to build rapport with participants and develop a thorough understanding of the school context. This prolonged engagement helped the researcher distinguish between regular practices and atypical occurrences (Creswell, 2018).

2 Transferability

To ensure transferability, the researcher provided a thick description of the research context, including detailed information about the school setting, participant characteristics, and the research procedures. Thick description enables readers to determine whether the findings may be applicable to other similar educational contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For example, the participants' teaching experience (ranging from seven to twenty-four years) and the school's use of the national curriculum with English as a medium of instruction are clearly described so that readers in similar contexts can make transferability judgments.

3 Dependability

To establish dependability, the researcher maintained an audit trail consisting of all research materials, including field notes, interview transcripts, questionnaire responses, lesson plan documents, and analysis notes. The audit trail allows an external auditor to trace the research

process and verify that the findings are grounded in the data. In addition, peer debriefing was conducted with a fellow researcher who reviewed the analysis process and provided feedback on the emerging themes (Creswell, 2018).

4 Confirmability

Confirmability was achieved through the same audit trail and triangulation strategies. The raw data (interviews, questionnaires, documents) and their analysis results were kept accessible for inspection, ensuring that the findings were derived from the data rather than from researcher bias or assumptions. The researcher also practiced reflexivity by documenting personal assumptions and biases in a reflective journal throughout the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

By implementing these strategies, the study ensured that the findings were credible, dependable, confirmable, and transferable within the bounds of qualitative research.

Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles of research involving human participants. Prior to data collection, the researcher obtained written informed consent from all three teacher participants. Each participant was provided with a clear explanation of the research objectives, the procedures involved, and their rights as participants. They were assured that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.

To protect participants' privacy and confidentiality, pseudonyms (Teacher 1, Teacher 2, Teacher 3) were used throughout the data analysis and reporting process. All raw data, including interview recordings, transcripts, questionnaire responses, and lesson plan documents, were stored securely in a password-protected computer accessible only to the researcher. Data will be retained for a period of five years after publication and then securely destroyed.

No deception was employed in this study, and no physical or psychological harm was anticipated for the participants. The research was conducted with full respect for the participants' professional roles and personal dignity.

Table 1. Participant profile

Participant	Teaching level	Teaching experience	Relevant background
Teacher 1	Grade 5	More than 9 years	Experience in non-formal and formal institutions, including kindergarten and primary English teaching
Teacher 2	Grade 4	More than 24 years	Experience across primary, secondary, and tertiary English teaching
Teacher 3	Grade 6	8 years	Experience in kindergarten and primary English teaching

Table 2. Data sources and analytical purposes

Data source	Instrument focus	Analytical purpose
Interview	Seven questions on teachers' understanding, reasons, goals, benefits, challenges, and frequency of ISA use	To identify teachers' perceptions of ISA
Questionnaire	Nine items on lesson duration, skill sequence, classroom activities, and assessment	To map the implementation sequence and classroom practice
Documentation	Lesson plans for Grades 4, 5, and 6	To verify planned integration and identify type of ISA

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Teachers' Perceptions of the Integrated Skills Approach

The interview data show that all three teachers perceived ISA positively, although their definitions varied in emphasis. Teacher 1 initially described integrated skills as a combination of learning approaches, mentioning audio-based learning, natural approach, direct method, and audio-lingual method. Her explanation suggests that she associated ISA with varied classroom techniques that make learning less monotonous. She stated that the classroom atmosphere had become too passive and that integrating skills made the class more active and "colorful." For her, ISA was not simply a theoretical term but a practical response to classroom engagement problems.

Teacher 2 defined ISA more directly as the integration of two or more English skills in the learning process. He gave examples such as listening with writing and reading with speaking. However, he also admitted that he did not always label these practices as "integrated skills," even though he used them in instruction. This finding indicates that teachers may implement forms of ISA without explicitly naming the approach. Teacher 2 viewed integration as advantageous because it enabled the teacher to cover several skills, but he also emphasized the need for careful preparation to minimize instructional difficulty.

Teacher 3 displayed the strongest explicit familiarity with ISA. She stated that bringing the four skills together in the classroom was necessary and that she usually needed 80 minutes to integrate all four skills, while 40 minutes was more suitable for integrating fewer skills. She perceived ISA as a way to enhance students' communication skills, but she also identified challenges, especially the limited availability of listening materials and assessment resources. Her response indicates that positive perception does not eliminate practical constraints; rather, teachers may value ISA while still facing media, time, and assessment limitations.

Across the three interviews, ISA was perceived as a compulsory or highly desirable approach for English learning because it supports communicative use of English. The teachers believed that English should not be taught only as a subject but as a language that students can use in daily life. This perception aligns with the communicative assumptions of Oxford (2001) and Pardede (2019), who emphasize the role of integrated instruction in optimizing students' communicative language ability. At the same time, the teachers' perceptions were grounded in

practical teaching realities: limited time, available materials, student readiness, and the need for well-prepared lesson plans.

Implementation Sequence of ISA in Classroom Practice

The questionnaire data clarify how teachers implemented ISA. All three teachers agreed that 80 minutes, or two 40-minute periods, were needed to integrate four skills. This finding is significant because it shows that teachers did not understand ISA as an instantaneous activity. Instead, they viewed integration as a lesson sequence requiring sufficient time. Two teachers reported that they told students about the main skill to be learned, while one teacher did not always do so. All three teachers reported that they taught spoken skills before written skills and that speaking was usually placed before listening in the instructional sequence.

Teacher 1 typically began with speaking activities, including teacher-student dialogue, student-student dialogue, and monologue, according to the learning purpose. Listening activities involved audio files or teacher input. Reading was often conducted individually, with attention to pronunciation errors. Writing was based on texts provided by the teacher and included correspondence, instructions, or idea development. At the end of learning, Teacher 1 often assessed students in relation to the main skill. Her implementation indicates that spoken interaction served as the opening stage, while writing became a consolidating activity at the end of the lesson.

Teacher 2 also reported that 80 minutes were required to integrate the four skills, but he did not always announce the main skill to students. He commonly began with speaking activities and used listening from the teacher before audio or cassette materials. For reading, he used activities aligned with the learning purpose, and writing was based on texts provided by the teacher. Teacher 2 reported giving assessments very often at the end of learning. Compared with the other teachers, his implementation emphasized the teacher as a direct source of listening input, suggesting that teacher modeling remained central to ISA in his classroom.

Teacher 3 similarly required two periods to integrate four skills and usually informed students of the main skill. She used dialogue, monologue, storytelling, teacher input, audio files, and native-speaker sources when available. Reading activities included fairytales or stories in groups, while writing could be based on students' experiences or personal ideas. She was often assessed at the end of learning. Her responses suggest a more varied repertoire of skill activities and a stronger attempt to connect language tasks with students' own experiences.

The lesson-plan documentation supports these questionnaire findings. Grade 4 and Grade 6 lesson plans focused on reading aloud but also required students to listen to teacher modeling, imitate pronunciation and intonation, read aloud individually, respond to questions, and connect the reading to daily life. The Grade 5 lesson plan focused on polite expressions, requiring students to identify expressions, listen to and imitate dialogue models, complete textbook dialogues, practice in pairs or groups, and perform dialogue in front of the class. Thus, even when the lesson-plan competency standards foregrounded one skill, the activity sequence activated several skills.

Table 3. Summary of ISA implementation patterns

Teacher	Stated time for four-skill integration	Typical opening skill	Common skill sequence	Assessment frequency
Teacher 1	80 minutes	Speaking	Speaking/listening → reading → writing	Often
Teacher 2	80 minutes	Speaking	Speaking → teacher-led listening → reading → writing	Very often
Teacher 3	80 minutes	Speaking	Speaking/listening → reading/story → writing	Often

Type of Integrated Skills Used by Teachers

The data indicate that the teachers used complex task-based integration. The integration was complex because the four skills could be activated within a single 80-minute lesson, even if one skill functioned as the main learning target. The integration was task-based because students were asked to perform specific classroom tasks, such as listening to a model, repeating expressions, reading aloud, completing dialogues, practicing in pairs, writing based on text, and performing in front of the class. These activities required students to use English as a medium for completing communicative or text-based tasks.

The distinction between main skills and supporting skills was important. Teachers did not always treat the four skills equally in every lesson. Instead, they selected one dominant skill based on the learning objective and used other skills to support it. For example, a reading-aloud lesson required listening to teacher modeling, speaking through oral reading, and sometimes writing corrections. A speaking lesson on polite expressions required listening to examples, reading dialogue scripts, completing written dialogue gaps, and performing orally. This structure reflects what Tolstykh and Khomutova (2012) describe as indirect skill integration within a lesson centered on one visible skill.

The lesson-plan analysis also shows that ISA was not separate from the textbook and curriculum but adapted through teacher design. The Grade 5 lesson plan, for example, used the textbook dialogue material as input but transformed it into a sequence of recognition, modeling, completion, pair practice, error correction, and oral performance. This demonstrates that teachers can implement ISA even when textbooks do not explicitly label activities as integrated skills. The effectiveness of such implementation depends on the teacher's ability to connect activities into a coherent sequence and to ensure that students understand the communicative purpose of each task.

The findings show that teachers perceived ISA positively because they associated it with communicative competence, classroom activation, and more meaningful English use. This perception is consistent with the theoretical argument that integrated instruction reflects authentic language use (Oxford, 2001; Pardede, 2019). In the teachers' view, segregated-skill

instruction may be administratively simpler but does not sufficiently prepare students to use English in daily communication. Their perception also reflects a practical concern: elementary students can become passive when lessons are monotonous. ISA was therefore valued not only because it is theoretically communicative but also because it provides a way to diversify classroom interaction.

The first contribution of this study is the identification of teacher perception as a bridge between ISA theory and classroom implementation. Earlier studies by Aydogan and Akbarov (2014) and Tajzad and Ostovar-Namaghi (2014) focused strongly on learners' perceptions and outcomes. The present study complements that line of inquiry by showing that teachers' beliefs about usefulness, feasibility, time allocation, and classroom media strongly shape how ISA is enacted. Even when teachers agree that ISA is beneficial, they still need to decide which skill becomes the main focus, how long integration requires, what materials are available, and how assessment should be placed.

The study also clarifies that ISA implementation in elementary EFL classrooms is sequential rather than strictly simultaneous. Teachers did not integrate the four skills by requiring all skills to occur at the same moment. Instead, they designed a sequence in which one skill initiated the lesson and other skills followed. This finding is pedagogically important because it makes ISA more realistic for classroom practice. If ISA is understood as the simultaneous use of all skills without sequencing, teachers may perceive it as impossible. However, if ISA is understood as a coherent sequence of related tasks, it becomes feasible within a two-period lesson.

The dominant sequence found in this study placed spoken skills before written skills. Speaking frequently served as an opening activity, often supported by listening to teacher input, audio, or dialogue models. Reading and writing were then used to consolidate comprehension and production. This pattern reflects the teachers' belief that oral interaction can prepare students for text-based work. It also fits elementary learners' classroom needs, because speaking and listening activities can activate attention before students engage in reading or writing. Nevertheless, the sequence should not be interpreted as a fixed formula. Depending on learning objectives, a reading-focused lesson can also activate listening, speaking, and writing as supporting skills.

The finding that the teachers used complex task-based integration aligns with Oxford's (2001) classification of task-based instruction as one form of ISA. Task-based integration was evident in the way teachers organized students' activities around purposeful classroom tasks. The Grade 5 lesson on "Do you mind..." and "Shall we..." demonstrates this clearly: students listened to and observed models, completed dialogue gaps, practiced in pairs or groups, and performed the dialogue. The outcome was not merely knowledge of expressions but the ability to use polite expressions in communicative situations. This is consistent with Richards' (2008) view that speaking can function as interaction, transaction, and performance.

The analysis also reveals a tension between curriculum-textbook structure and communicative integration. Teachers reported that integrated skills were not always clearly written in textbooks, and lesson plans often emphasized one competency standard. This condition may encourage teachers to continue with segregated-skill instruction. However, the documentation shows that teachers can reinterpret textbook activities through integration. A text can become a listening model, a pronunciation exercise, a reading activity, a comprehension discussion, and a written response task. Therefore, the challenge is not simply the absence of integrated materials but the need for teacher training in transforming skill-specific materials into integrated task sequences.

Another important issue is assessment. The teachers often or very often gave assessments at the end of integrated lessons, but assessments remained linked to the main skill rather than all skills equally. This practice is understandable because lesson objectives usually specify a dominant competency, such as reading aloud or performing dialogue. However, integrated teaching would be strengthened if assessment criteria also recognized supporting skills. For example, a dialogue performance could assess speaking fluency, listening responsiveness, pronunciation, vocabulary use, and written preparation. Galaczi's (2018) argument that integrated assessment can provide more accurate evidence of language ability is relevant here, although further research is needed to design practical instruments for elementary classrooms.

The study's findings should be interpreted in light of its limitations. The original research could not include classroom observation because face-to-face learning was disrupted by the pandemic. As a result, implementation was inferred from interviews, questionnaire responses, and lesson-plan documents rather than observed classroom interaction. In addition, the study involved only three teachers from one private elementary school. These limitations restrict generalization, but they do not reduce the value of the study as a qualitative case. Instead, the findings provide a detailed account of how experienced teachers in one bounded context understand and plan ISA.

The implications are practical and theoretical. Practically, elementary EFL teachers need structured support for designing ISA lessons, especially in selecting the main skill, sequencing supporting skills, preparing listening materials, and designing end-of-lesson assessments. Schools should also provide richer audio resources, model dialogues, and adaptable task templates so that teachers are not forced to rely only on textbook activities. Theoretically, the study suggests that ISA should be conceptualized as teacher-mediated sequencing. In elementary EFL contexts, the success of ISA depends not only on the principle of integrating four skills but also on how teachers translate that principle into time-bound, age-appropriate, task-based classroom routines.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the Integrated Skills Approach was positively perceived by three elementary EFL teachers at SD Mutiara Bangsa 2, Tangerang City. The teachers viewed ISA

as a necessary approach for improving students' English competence, activating classroom participation, and moving English instruction beyond monotonous, segregated-skill routines. The implementation of ISA was not simultaneous in a narrow sense; it was sequenced within approximately 80 minutes of instruction. Teachers commonly select one main skill and allow other supporting skills to appear through related tasks, usually beginning with spoken activities and continuing toward reading or writing. The type of integration identified in the lesson plans and teacher reports was complex task-based integration, because the four skills were connected through specific classroom tasks such as listening to teacher modeling, reading aloud, completing dialogues, practicing in pairs, writing from texts, and performing orally. The study contributes to the literature on ISA by highlighting teachers' perceptions and planning practices in an Indonesian elementary EFL context. It also suggests that effective ISA implementation requires clearer textbook support, richer listening resources, explicit teacher training, and integrated assessment rubrics. Future research should include classroom observation, involve more schools and grade levels, and examine how students' learning outcomes are affected by different patterns of integrated-skill sequencing.

Suggestions

Based on the findings, several suggestions can be offered. Teachers should design lesson sequences that clearly identify one main skill while systematically integrating supporting skills through related tasks, and utilize various resources such as audio, video, and authentic texts to enrich listening and speaking activities within integrated lesson sequences.

Schools should provide richer audio resources, model dialogues, and adaptable task templates to support ISA implementation, as well as organize regular training and workshops for teachers on designing effective integrated skills lessons.

For further research, it is recommended to conduct classroom observation to verify teachers' self-reported practices and examine how different patterns of skill sequencing affect students' learning outcomes. Further studies also need to involve more schools and grade levels to obtain a more comprehensive picture of ISA implementation across various contexts, and quantitative research can be conducted to measure the effectiveness of ISA on improving students' communicative competence in measurable terms.

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