TAMADDUN JURNAL BAHASA, SASTRA DAN BUDAYA **LIFE**

The English Instructor's Perception of Private Tutoring for Secondary School Students in Indonesia

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Abstract

Many families utilize English private tutoring to help their children with their homework or improve their skills; in doing so, they are taking part in an additional "shadow education" system on top of regular schooling. This research utilized qualitative methods to explore the perspectives of English instructors on private tutoring for secondary school students. Two English instructors were interviewed to obtain their views on private tutoring. The interview technique involved creating an interview guide and using structured online interviews. The data was categorized into core themes or categories, with both participants enthusiastically expressing their perspectives on the causes and impacts of English private tutoring. The result showed that private tutoring is perceived as beneficial for students struggling with English lessons, as it allows them extra time outside school hours and enhances their understanding. Instructors must provide personalized knowledge and engage students in innovative sessions. Parents play a crucial role in guiding students' activities. Private tutoring can boost students' intention to learn English and increase their learning behavior. Instructors tailor their approach to meet the needs of private students

Keywords: English Instructor, Private Tutoring, Perceptions, Secondary School Education.

INTRODUCTION

Long before schools were founded, children from privileged families were taught by private tutors or special instructors. Even now, when the era of universal education is available, many parents still hire private teachers or special instructors to increase the knowledge their children receive at school. This is referred to as private tutoring, and in recent years, it has grown in popularity as an after-school learning activity for students. Students use this paid service to supplement in-class academic subjects outside of school hours. According to a recent international study, this very small-scale activity is expected to increase and will eventually have a major impact on the education system (M. Bray, 2003). Globally, private tutoring as an adjunct to traditional education is common and seems to be growing (Baker & Le Tendre, 2005).

Private tutoring is a multimillion-dollar industry that has been prevalent for over 20 years worldwide. Its significant effects on education as well as economic and social development have drawn more attention from scholars, educators, and policymakers (M. Bray & Lykins, 2012). Private tutoring is called "shadow education" because it replicates the conventional curriculum (M. Bray, 2017). Even if private tutoring is becoming increasingly common in the West (Buchmann et al., 2010) it is most common in Confucian-heritage cultures, where parents value education as a method of achieving social mobility (M. Bray & Lykins, 2012). As a symbol of wealth and power and a prerequisite for advanced study and a successful career, many of non-English-speaking cultures (i.e., where the language is predominantly spoken as a second or foreign language, rather than a first language) include English as a significant subject in the national curriculum (Kirkpatrick & Liddicoat, 2019). However, it is rarely utilized for real conversation in day-to-day interactions and is typically learned as an extra language and as a school topic. As English education is usually limited in schools, many parents pay for English private tutoring (EPT) to enhance their children's English learning outside of school hours (Hamid et al., 2018). This phenomenon is visible in Indonesia because English is a specialization subject. Only in the Merdeka curriculum implemented since 2021/2022, has English been emphasized as an important thing. Nevertheless, English private tutoring is becoming an increasingly common form of after-school language tutoring in many non-English speaking neighborhoods.

By focusing on the perspectives of private tutors, this study offers an important contribution to filling the existing research gap regarding the phenomenon of private tutoring, especially in the Indonesian educational context. The views provided by instructors can enrich our understanding of the practical impact of private tutoring. In this sense, focusing on the perceptions of private instructors is not only important to understand the dynamics of private tutoring, but also to provide more comprehensive insights that future policymakers and educators can use to improve the quality of education in Indonesia.

Conceptualizing Private Tutoring

Private tutoring, as defined by (T. M. Bray, 1999), is academic tutoring (including language tutoring), given by instructors for pay, and taken in addition to regular schooling. Outside of the official school system, (Tansel & Bircan, 2006) define it as education, and they also associate it with profit. But as is often the case in many nations, this financial gain places a financial strain on the students' families. In Vietnam, for instance, (Dang, 2007) states that private tutoring is a necessary expense for the family's budget. There is a direct correlation between the need for private tutoring and family income and the quality of public education, according to (Ireson & Rushforth, 2014).

Shadow education is another name for private tutoring, private supplemental tutoring, or simply tutoring, has become a worldwide educational phenomenon throughout the past ten years. (M. Bray, 2010) stated that private tutoring has been called a "shadow" since it shares many similarities with the traditional educational system. It is a result of the existence of traditional schooling. Its size and orientation increase in tandem with mainstream schooling, and society frequently pays more attention to the mainstream than to the shadow. Private tutoring, sometimes known as "shadow education," is a large sector in many regions of the world, including Asia, and it is expanding quickly in other regions as well, including Africa, Europe, and North America (M. Bray, 2006).

EFL Education in Indonesia

It is necessary to discuss language planning in a multilingual environment while discussing EFL instruction in Indonesia, a country with 742 regional languages (Gordon Jr, 2005). After learning their native tongue as young children, most go on to study Indonesian in school as a second language. The native languages, Indonesian, and English are now taught to third-graders in large cities gradually. We can't expect Grade 9 pupils in such a setting to be as proficient in English as their peers who, for example, study the language as a second language in Singapore and the Philippines. The linguistic structure of languages that have already been learned is said to make learning a new language difficult for learners. They will "freeze" or become trapped at a rather abnormal level in their proficiency (Myles & Mitchel, 2004). In elementary schools, English is often taught for 70 minutes a week, and in junior secondary schools, for 160 minutes. In this regard, (Lightbown & Spada, 2020) has proposed that the age at which instruction starts is not as significant in instructional contexts as the level of instruction and the exposure sustained for a long enough duration.

The employment of grammatical translation methods, direct method, communicative language teaching, and genre-based approach are the four main evolutionary paths that the history of EFL instruction in Indonesia appears to have followed. As is always the case, new approaches or methods of instruction are always received with pros and cons. (Alwasilah, 2013) described, the secondary EFL teachers stated that they employed the following strategies or techniques: communicative approach (1.9%), genre-based approach (2.9%), active, innovative, creative, effective, and fun (8.6%), and contextual teaching and learning (10.5%).

In Indonesia, taking English after school is fairly common. They typically offer English instruction to students at various skill levels. The cost of the courses varies from language center to language center depending on what they provide. A minimum of two varieties of tutoring systems exists. First, a course designed to raise the standard of English proficiency practically. This kind of language center typically has a syllabus that emphasizes improving students' English communication skills. Second, the kind of course that is designed to help pupils pass their school or national exams. To familiarize students with the various test formats, they are exposed to a variety of national exam formats. Only a certain number of pupils can afford to pay this additional English tuition. The bulk of pupils rely on classroom instruction to improve their English ability.

METHOD

This research was carried out using qualitative methods. This aims to obtain more in-depth information regarding the English instructor's perspective on private tutoring for secondary school students. According to (Yin, 2018) qualitative research facilitates the investigation of a wide range

of subjects in-depth. The participants in this research were two English instructors who provided private tutoring to secondary school students. The researchers chose private tutors because private tutors provide a richer and more diverse picture of this private tutoring phenomenon as two teachers with different experiences can have different perceptions. The two English tutors were interviewed to obtain their views on English private tutoring. The interview technique in this research was carried out by creating an interview guide that was appropriate to the problem and used for questions and answers with informants. Data was obtained from structured interviews conducted online. Interviews with two English instructors each lasted 40 minutes. The researchers analyzed the audio recordings after the interviews were completed and made transcripts of both, noting comprehensive ideas and relevant details.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The information provided by the interviewees was examined and categorized. (Rubin & Rubin, 2011) define coding as "the process of organizing interviewees' responses into groups that bring together the ideas, concepts, or themes you have discovered that are similar." When the researcher coded the interview data, they highlighted or circled words, phrases, or sentences that he thought would be useful as categories. By following this process, the researcher was able to classify the data into core themes or categories.

Both participants were very enthusiastic to express their perspectives regarding the causes and impacts of English private tutoring as well as several other questions such as students' progress and success provided by researchers related to private tutoring. Responses from both participants from these interviews are summarized and discussed below.

Perspectives on Private Tutoring

Based on the results of interviews with two English instructors, they have a general perception of English private tutoring. One instructor explained:

"Persepsi saya mengenai les privat untuk siswa sekolah menengah ialah mempermudah siswa untuk lebih memahami pelajaran bahasa inggris yang siswa rasa sulit di sekolah, di les privat lah mereka biasanya akan mendapatkan lebih banyak pembelajaran dan pemahaman dibanding di sekolah siswa tersebut" (Interview with instructor 1)

In general, English instructors have the perception that private lessons can make it easier and help students to better understand English lessons that students find difficult at school. With private tutoring, students can have a lot of extra time to study English outside school hours. Students also gain more learning and understanding than at the student's school.

Private tutoring has a big impact on students' learning and understanding because students often bring their homework to do in a private place. As one instructor put it:

"Les privat sangat berpengaruh, karena menurut pengalaman saya siswa saya akan membawa tugas rumah mereka untuk di kerjakan di tempat les dan mereka akan lebih banyak bertanya di tempat les yang mereka belum pahami saat pembelajaran di sekolah." (Interview with instructor 1)

This follows the statement by (Ireson, 2004) that students can use any kind of tutoring to catch up on coursework or review material. Students can more freely ask about material that they do not or do not understand when studying at school. The influence on the results of private tutoring itself can be seen in the student's grades at school or during the test at the last meeting with the instructor. In other words, English instructors have an important role in meeting the needs of students who choose private lessons. This is because the English instructor is a forum for students who may be limited in gaining knowledge at school, but when private, the instructor will be more able to provide knowledge personally.

Besides that, there are potential challenges posed by private tutoring in teaching English in traditional classes as explained by the instructor:

"Tantangannya ialah kami memiliki tanggung jawab lebih untuk mencerdaskan dan memahamkan siswa kami yang kurang dalam ilmu bahasa inggrisnya dan mencari inovasi beragam tiap pertemuan agar siswa tidak bosan melainkan senang untuk belajar bahasa Inggris" (Interview with instructor 1)

English instructors have the challenge of their responsibility to educate and provide understanding to students who lack knowledge of English. English instructors are also responsible for looking for various innovations in every meeting so that students do not get bored but enjoy learning English.

Student Progress and Success

The child has opportunities to learn and grow in knowledge and skills within the family and community, and parents have a significant role in guiding their activities (Lave, 1991; Rogoff, 1990) In the private tutoring process, the active role of parents is also important, as the instructor said:

"...kami usahakan untuk bertemu sekali dalam sebulan untuk peninjauan belajar siswa tersebut. Orang tua pun selalu turut andil melakukan kedisiplinan belajar siswa. Dan alhamdulillah, orang tua siswa pun percaya terhadap les privat kami untuk membantu anak mereka lebih baik dalam bahasa Inggris" (Interview with instructor 1)

Another instructor commented by saying:

"...orang tua adalah partner kita dalam mendidik anaknya, jadi kita harus saling bekerjasama agar tujuan kita bisa tercapai dengan baik..." (Interview with instructor 2)

Parents are partners in educating students. This can be seen from parents who take part in disciplining students' learning. One example was when at home, parents have to repeat the material given or the vocabulary they have memorized over and over again.

According to a different study, students who received extra tutoring showed more frequent behaviors related to English learning inside and outside the classroom and had stronger intentions to learn the language than students who only received lessons in regular classes (Huang, 2017). The appropriate teaching method in private tutoring for each student is that the English instructor is required to take an approach. Then from this approach, the instructor can find a solution by

determining the right method tailored to the needs of private students. Every child has different abilities so it is necessary to do a pre-test first to see their abilities. What students consider difficult can be made easier with several strategies or methods that are right for them.

The first obvious reason to have an English private tutor is English language difficulties (Alotaibi, 2014) Students who have difficulty in English need to be given motivation. As explained by the instructor:

> *"saya memotivasinya dengan cara memberikan cntoh di sekitar mereka orang-orang yang sukses dan bisa keluar negeri dengan menguasai bahasa inggris dan saya juga selalu menanamkan kepada mereka kalau bahasa inggris tidaklah sulit"* (Interview with instructor 2)

From the interview results, we know that the English instructors usually give examples around them of successful people who were able to go abroad by mastering English and always instill in students that English is not difficult. Apart from that, they will be given a star every time they finish a learning activity, such as memorizing vocabulary. If the students get enough stars, there is a prize for them. As one instructor put it:

> *"...saya menerapkan reward setiap mereka melakukan aktifitas belajar, seperti menghapal kosa kata akan saya beri bintang dan jika bintangnya sudah cukup 30, ada hadiah untuk mereka..."* (Interview with instructor 1)

This can motivate students to be excited about learning because there are prizes for them. This is the instructor's way of appreciating students' enthusiasm for learning.

Discussion

The findings of this study shed light on the perceptions of English instructors regarding private tutoring, emphasizing its advantages, challenges, and the crucial roles of instructors and parents. Below, the results are interpreted in relation to existing literature, with implications and recommendations discussed.

1. Enhanced Understanding Through Private Tutoring

The instructors highlighted that private tutoring significantly aids students in addressing difficulties with English, providing additional time and personalized attention that is often lacking in traditional classrooms. This resonates with Bray's (2010) description of private tutoring as a form of "shadow education" that complements formal schooling by addressing students' individual learning needs.

The personalized attention in private tutoring aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which suggests that learning occurs most effectively when learners receive guidance tailored to their needs. Instructors can scaffold students' learning by focusing on their unique challenges, helping them transition from what they can do independently to what they can achieve with support.

2. The Role of Parents in Learning Outcomes

The findings underscore the significant role of parents in supporting their children's private tutoring experiences. Parents actively guide students and reinforce their learning at home, acting as partners in the educational process. This aligns with Epstein's (2001) theory of parental involvement, which posits that active parental engagement enhances students' academic success and motivation.

The collaboration between parents and tutors ensures consistency between home and tutoring environments, which is critical in fostering students' self-discipline and learning behaviors. As noted by Ireson and Rushforth (2011), effective parental support in private tutoring contexts can significantly boost students' academic achievements and confidence.

3. Motivational Strategies in Private Tutoring

The motivational techniques used by instructors, such as providing rewards and emphasizing the practical benefits of learning English, play a crucial role in sustaining student engagement. This aligns with Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory, which highlights the importance of fostering intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in learners.

Instructors' efforts to make learning enjoyable through gamification and rewards are supported by studies like Huang (2017), which found that positive reinforcement in private tutoring settings can lead to increased student motivation and stronger intentions to learn. These strategies not only engage students but also help build a positive association with the learning process.

4. Challenges of Innovating in Private Tutoring

While private tutoring provides numerous benefits, it also presents challenges for instructors, who must continuously innovate to keep students engaged and address diverse needs. This reflects the findings of Bray and Kobakhidze (2014), who noted that private tutors often face pressures to deliver high-quality, customized instruction in competitive environments.

The need for innovation aligns with constructivist learning theories, which emphasize active and participatory learning. Instructors are tasked with designing creative lessons that not only cater to individual learning styles but also maintain students' interest and enthusiasm, a challenge that requires both pedagogical expertise and resourcefulness.

5. Systemic Implications and Equity Concerns

The reliance on private tutoring to address gaps in formal education raises concerns about equity and access. As Bray (2013) points out, the growing prevalence of private tutoring often reflects shortcomings in public education systems and exacerbates socioeconomic disparities. Not all students can afford private tutoring, which creates unequal opportunities for academic success.

Addressing these inequities requires systemic changes in public education, including smaller class sizes, personalized learning approaches, and improved teacher training. Integrating effective practices from private tutoring, such as individualized instruction and active engagement, into public education can help bridge the gap and reduce reliance on external tutoring services.

CONCLUSION

English instructors generally believe private tutoring can help students better understand difficult English lessons and provide extra time for studying outside school hours. Private tutoring significantly impacts students' learning and understanding, as it can provide more personal attention and help them ask questions about material they may not understand in school. The influence of private tutoring on students' grades can be seen in their final meeting with the instructor. However, there are potential challenges posed by private tutoring in traditional English classes, such as the instructor's need to educate and provide understanding to students who lack knowledge of English and to innovate to keep students engaged and motivated continuously.

Private tutoring is crucial in guiding children's learning and development within their families and communities. Parents play an active role in guiding their children's activities and disciplining their learning. Additional tutoring can lead to stronger intentions to learn English and a higher frequency of English learning behavior both inside and outside school. The appropriate teaching method in private tutoring is tailored to each student's needs, with a pre-test to determine their abilities.

English language difficulties are a significant reason for having an English private tutor. Instructors motivate students by providing motivational examples and encouraging them to learn English. They also instill the belief that English is not difficult and reward students with stars for completing learning activities. This motivates students to be excited about learning and appreciating their enthusiasm.

This research shows that private tutoring can have a positive impact on students, but it also brings challenges that need to be addressed by educators and policymakers. Therefore, it is important to create better collaboration between school teachers and private tutors, improve training for private tutors, and pay more attention to students' social-emotional well-being. These recommendations aim to promote improvements in the overall quality of education, which not only relies on private tutoring, but also ensures that formal education can cover the academic needs of all students.

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