Does It Stand The Time? A Systematic Literature Review on Drilling for Teaching English to Young Learners

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Abstrak

Drilling dianggap sebagai metode yang identik dengan pendekatan pengajaran yang kuno, namun masih populer dalam konteks negara EFL, khususnya pada pengajaran bahasa Inggris untuk anak-anak (TEYL). Literatur yang ada menampilkan berbagai perspektif mengenai efektivitas drilling, sehingga menunjukkan perlunya pemahaman yang lebih komprehensif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi jenis, kelebihan, dan tantangan penggunaan drilling di kelas TEYL di Indonesia untuk memahami apakah teknik ini masih relevan dalam konteks pengajaran saat ini. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui Systematic Literature Review (SLR), data dianalisis dari 14 artikel yang dipilih berdasarkan kriteria inklusi dan ekslusi yang telah ditetapkan. Artikel-artikel tersebut diperoleh menggunakan Publish or Perish (PoP) dari basis data Google Scholar yang dipublikasikan antara tahun 2014 hingga 2024. Data dianalisis secara tematik menggunakan analisis tabel melalui proses kodifikasi dan kategorisasi, yang kemudian menunjukkan enam jenis utama drilling yang ditemukan, yaitu repetition drill, question-and-answer drill, chain drill, single-slot substitution drill, multiple-slot substitution drill, dan snowball drilling. Adapun kelebihan drilling meliputi peningkatan keterlibatan siswa, peningkatan penguasaan kosakata, peningkatan kemampuan pelafalan dan berbicara, serta dukungan pembelajaran melalui integrasi multimedia. Sebaliknya, tantangan yang muncul mencakup kesalahan pelafalan, kurangnya keterlibatan siswa di awal pembelajaran, kesulitan menghafal kosakata, dan rasa bosan pada siswa yang pandai. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa drilling perlu diintegrasikan dengan strategi pembelajaran yang interaktif dan kontekstual untuk mengatasi tantangan serta meningkatkan efektivitasnya dalam pengajaran TEYL yang modern di konteks EFL.

Kata Kunci: *Drilling, Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing, Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris bagi Anak Muda, Studi Literatur Sistematik.*

Abstract

Drilling may be considered a method of the past within teaching approaches, but it can still be popular in the EFL context, particularly for Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL). Existing literatures present varying perspectives on the effectiveness of drilling, indicating a need to explore a more comprehensive understanding. This study aims to generally identify the types, advantages, and challenges of drilling used in Indonesian TEYL classrooms to better understand if the drilling is still relevant in the current teaching context. Employing a qualitative approach through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), data were analyzed from 14 articles selected through predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The articles were retrieved using a selection process through Publish or Perish (PoP) from the Google Scholar database and published between 2014 and 2024. Data were analyzed thematically using a table analysis through coding and categorization, covering six main types of drilling: repetition drill, question-and-answer drill, chain drill, single-slot substitution drill, multiple-slot substitution drill, and snowball drilling. The advantages of drilling include increasing student engagement, improving vocabulary mastery, enhancing pronunciation and speaking skills, and supporting learning through multimedia integration. Conversely, challenges involve pronunciation errors, initial lack of engagement, difficulty in memorizing vocabulary, and boredom among advanced learners. The findings suggest that drilling should be integrated with interactive and contextual learning strategies to address the challenges and enhance its effectiveness in modern TEYL settings within the EFL context.

Keywords: Drilling, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL), Systematic Literature Review (SLR).

1. Introduction

Drilling is considered a traditional method in language teaching. However, it shows as one of the effective methods for Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) and is now still implemented in teaching and learning classrooms (Ambawani & Putranti, 2023; Halimah et al., 2022; Mulyadi et al., 2024). It involves the repetitive practice of words, phrases, or sentences to reinforce students' language skills (Zumrah & Manurung, 2021) and focuses on memorization and habit formation (Paulston, 1970). Drilling has been found to positively influence the language skills of EFL learners (Mansyur et al., 2023) and is particularly effective in contexts where learners have limited exposure to the target language, such as in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) countries like Indonesia. Despite being viewed as a traditional approach, drilling continues to be implemented in Indonesian classrooms because of its simplicity and applicability in various teaching environments (Lufri et al., 2016; Shanmugavelu & R.K. Sundaram, 2020).

In TEYL contexts, drilling helps children internalize vocabulary and sentence patterns by repeating them frequently (Willis, 2008). Repetition through drilling is essential in early language development (Oktaviani, 2018). Drilling provides structured language exposure, which is crucial in the Indonesian EFL setting, where learners have limited English exposure outside the classroom. Through repetition, learners become familiar with pronunciation and sentence structures, reinforcing their ability to recall and use English effectively.

A number of studies have explored the use of drilling in teaching English to young learners in Indonesia. For instance, Hidayat et al. (2022), Mulyadi et al. (2024), and Anggraini (2018) examined its effectiveness in improving speaking skills, while Halimah et al. (2022) and Rofi'ah & Huda (2020) investigated drilling for vocabulary teaching. Their findings reveal that drilling increases engagement and participation. Similarly, Pratiwi & Simorangkir (2022) and Ambawani & Putranti (2023) mention that drilling enhances learners' pronunciation accuracy and confidence. However, some studies have raised some criticisms. Wong & Van Patten (2003) argued that drilling may not promote communicative competence as it emphasizes accuracy over fluency. Albay (2016) also noted that students sometimes repeat phrases without comprehension, while Andarbeni (2010) found that repetitive practice can lead to boredom and limited motivation.

Building on these perspectives, the researchers conducted preliminary research by implementing the drilling in an online TEYL classroom and found that learners could follow pronunciation accurately, as noted by Pratiwi & Simorangkir (2022) and Ambawani & Putranti (2023), but had difficulty in recalling vocabulary, as Andarbeni (2010) found. This suggests a dependency on teacher-led repetition and limited learner autonomy, as also highlighted by Albay (2016).

These mixed findings show that drilling has various dimensions. Therefore, there is a need for more comprehensive information to better understand drilling in the Indonesian TEYL context. Most existing studies focus on drilling for specific language skills rather than presenting a synthesized overview of drilling as a whole. Therefore, this research aims to conduct a systematic literature review (SLR) on the implementation of the drilling method in TEYL in the Indonesian EFL context. It specifically investigates the research questions: 1) What are the types of drilling in the Indonesian TEYL context?, 2) What are the advantages of drilling in the Indonesian TEYL context?, 3) What are the challenges of drilling in the Indonesian TEYL context? The findings are expected to provide broad insights and valuable references for English teachers and educational researchers to understand and innovate drilling in TEYL classrooms to meet the upcoming needs of young learners in the EFL context.

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative research method in the form of a systematic literature review. It aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the various types of drilling, along with its advantages and challenges, in the Indonesian TEYL context as reported in journal articles. The researchers served as the key instrument who played a central role in designing, collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the data (Sidiq et al., 2019). The source of data was derived primarily from the selection of relevant journal articles through Google Scholar as the main database using the Publish or Perish (PoP) App. The inclusion and exclusion criteria of the source of data were carefully considered to identify and select the most pertinent and valid data. The inclusion and exclusion criteria consist of several key points as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The Inclusion and Exclusion Article Criteria

No	Inclusion	Exclusion
1	Peer-reviewed journal articles	Non-peer-reviewed journal articles
2	Google Scholar database	Non-Google Scholar databases
3	English or Indonesian journal articles	Non-English/Indonesian journal articles
4	Last 10 years published (2014-2024)	Before 2014 or after 2024
5	Empirical studies	Theoretical studies
6	Topic about drilling in TEYL	Topic outside drilling in TEYL
7	Study in the Indonesian EFL context	Study outside the Indonesian EFL context
8	Focus on young learners	Focus on adult learners

In the data selection process, the researchers used the specific keyword "English Drilling or Drilling " in the Publish or Perish (PoP) tools, specifically in the Google Scholar database. The search was limited to studies published between 2014 and 2024, which initially resulted in 116 articles. To refine the selection, the researchers filtered the articles based on the predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria (see Table 1). After applying these criteria, some articles were removed, including 14 duplicate articles, 4 articles published in languages other than Indonesian or English, and 1 restricted article. After the reduction, 97 articles went through further screening. During the screening stage, these 97 articles were reviewed to ensure they met the inclusion criteria. As a result, 28 articles were further excluded because they were not peer-reviewed articles. Following this exclusion, 69 articles were sought for full-text retrieval, but 2 articles could not be retrieved as they were non-empirical research. This resulted in 67 articles for the eligibility assessment. In the eligibility assessment stage, the 67 remaining articles were further evaluated to ensure their relevance to the research focus. Some articles were excluded for specific reasons, 3 articles were not about drilling in TEYL, 18 articles focused on adult learners, and 32 studies were conducted outside of Indonesia, making them unsuitable for this research context. Finally, only 14 studies met all the inclusion criteria and were selected as the final dataset for this systematic literature review study, as presented in Figure 1.

In this research, the researcher used a table analysis to organize and make sense of the information collected from the selection of relevant journal articles. It allows the researchers to see patterns and important findings in a clear and structured way. The table enables a clear mapping that guides in understanding types of drilling methods used in TEYL in Indonesia, as well as the advantages and challenges as the goal of this study. This table makes the research process organized and helps to get a good and comprehensive grasp of the subject, as follows.

Table 2. Table Article Analysis

No	Code	Author & year	Article Title	Site & Participant	Method	Language Competence	Types of drilling	Advantages	Challenges
1									
2									
3									

Table 2 above is designed to organize and collect data that support the research objectives. It includes several important key points in columns. The "No" shows the number assigned to each selected journal article. The "Code" provides a short identifier used to label each article. The "Author & Year" lists the writer(s) of the article and the year it was published. The "Article Title" presents the title of each selected article to show its main topic. The "Site & Participants" explains where the research was conducted and who took part in it. The "Method" describes the research approach used. The "Language Competence" refers to which language aspect (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation) or language skill (listening, reading, writing, or speaking) the study focused on.

The essential section covers three sub-points: (1) "Types of Drilling" means the classification of certain drilling such as backward build-up (expansion) drill, repetition drill, chain drill, single-slot substitution drill, multiple-slot substitution drill, transformational drill, and question-and-answer drill used in TEYL within the Indonesian EFL context reported in selected journal articles; (2) "Advantages" means the benefit that can be reached in using drilling for TEYL in the Indonesian EFL context; and (3) "Challenges" means the difficulties encountered in implementing drilling in Indonesian TEYL.

This research used a content analysis to collect all of the information. The first step is searching for relevant articles based on relevant keywords in Google Scholar as the primary databases through Publish or Perish (PoP). In the second step, the researchers then carefully read and selected the articles based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria, following the PRISMA flow diagram format to determine the selected journal articles as the data.

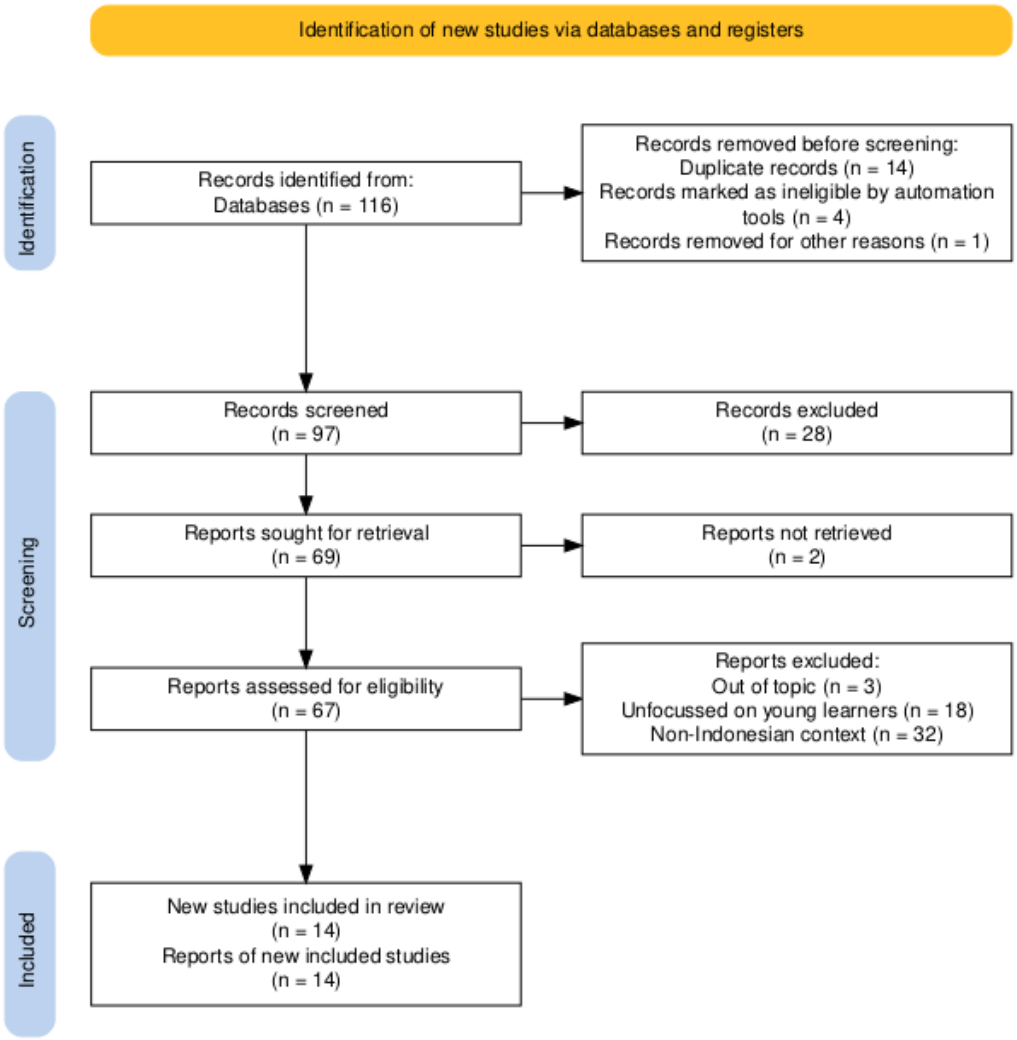

Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram (PRISMA, 2020)

The third step is coding and classifying information based on table analysis (see Table 2) about some important elements, including the type of drilling, advantages, and challenges. The fourth step is thematizing the findings to understand the themes and patterns of the subject. This was done by calculating and grouping the number of occurrences of the types of drilling, advantages, and challenges. Then, the last step is reporting and drawing conclusions from the collected findings of important themes and patterns about types of drilling methods used in Indonesian TEYL classrooms, and also the advantages and challenges.

The final report of this content analysis was reported by following the PRISMA checklist to provide a clear structure in presenting the results. It began with describing the study selection process, including how many studies were found, included, and excluded. Then, the findings section presented information from individual studies and synthesised them to highlight key points based on the relevant data. It also included analyses to examine the consistency and reliability of the results. In the discussion section, the findings were interpreted in relation to previous studies, with attention to their implications for practice and future research.

3. Results and Discussion

Results

This section first presents the list of 14 selected articles reviewed in this Systematic Literature Review (SLR) study. After mapping these studies, a content analysis was conducted to identify patterns related to the types of drilling used in TEYL classrooms, along with the reported advantages and challenges. Then, the results are presented in the following subsections in line with the objectives of this study.

Table 3. Selected Articles

Article Code	Author & Year of Publication	Article Title
R1	Sri Susilawati, Syamsul Rizal (2014)	The Implementation of Snowball Drilling Technique in Teaching English Vocabulary
R2	Desti Yuni Suprapti, M. Nasirun, Wembrayarli (2017)	Implementasi Kemampuan Vocabulary Bahasa Inggris Melalui Metode Drill Berbasis Lingkungan
R3	Dewi Anggraini (2018)	Chain Drill Technique in Teaching Speaking
R4	Nurul Aini, Nurul Khoyimah, Iman Santoso (2020)	Improving Students Speaking Ability Through Repetition Drill
R5	Tira Nur Fitria (2022)	Pengajaran Kosakata Dasar Bahasa Inggris (English Basic Vocabulary) dengan Metode Drilling Untuk Anak-Anak Desa Kalangan Mulur Sukoharjo
R6	Halimah, Vina Nurviyani, Asep Saepulah, Jauhar Helmie, Rahmi Wulandari Wandawati (2022)	Virtual Reality-Supported Drilling Strategy in Teaching English Vocabulary to Young Learners
R7	Yusuf Hidayat, Ani Herniawati, Nu'man Ihsanda (2022)	The Use of Drilling Technique to Teach English Speaking to the Early Childhoods: A Descriptive Study
R8	Marcelina, Sabarun, Nurul Wahdah, Herawati (2022)	Pengajaran Kosakata Dasar Bahasa Inggris (English Basic Vocabulary) dengan Metode Drilling di SMPN Satu Atap 1 Jabiren Raya
R9	Theodesia Lady Pratiwi, Angel Rosinta Uli Simorangkir (2022)	Improving students' English pronunciation through drilling technique at SDS Pelangi School
R10	Fidella Alivia Wahyuning Arief, Imam Rohani (2022)	Improving English Vocabulary Mastery through Audio Lingual and Drill Methods for Class VII-I in English Subjects at MTs "Wali Songo" Ngabar Ponorogo
R11	Muhammad Najib, Maya Rahma Sarita, Ani Khoirotun Nisa, Andi Prastowo (2023)	The Utilization of Drill and Practice Youtube Video Model to Improve English Proficiency in Elementary Schools
R12	Faidah Yusuf, Hikmawati Usman, Muhammad Irfan (2023)	The Use of Drill Method to Improve Elementary School Students' Learning Outcomes in Vocabulary
R13	Nono Mulyono, Nu'man Ihsanda, Laily Nuraeni, Zahra Sofwah Azizah (2023)	Drilling Technique to Improve the Young Learners' English Vocabulary Mastery
R14	Mulyadi, Dery Purnama Saefudin, Ahmad Bakhtiar (2024)	The Effect of Substitution Drill Technique on Students' English Speaking Skills

3.1. What are the Types of Drilling in Indonesian TEYL Context?

The classification of drilling types was derived from Larsen-Freeman & Anderson's (2013) theoretical framework on drilling techniques. There are six types of drilling identified from the 14 selected articles, with the repetition drill being the most frequently used, followed by the question-and-answer drill, chain drill, single-slot substitution drill, multiple-slot substitution drill, and snowball drilling. Table

4 provides an overview of the various types of drilling employed by the teachers in Indonesian TEYL classrooms in the selected articles.

Table 4. Types of Drilling Code

No	Types of Drilling	Article Code	Frequency
1	Repetition Drill	R2, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10, R11, R12, R13	11
2	Question-and-Answer Drill	R10, R11	2
3	Chain Drill	R3	1
4	Single-slot Substitution Drill	R14	1
5	Multiple-slot Substitution Drill	R14	1
6	Snowball Drilling	R1	1

Based on Table 4, repetition drills are identified in 11 articles (R2, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10, R11, R12, R13). This finding indicates that repetition drill is the most dominant type of drilling used in TEYL within the Indonesian EFL context, as reported in the 11 articles. In the TEYL classroom, the repetition drill is typically implemented by having the teacher give an initial example multiple times of the target language. Then, the students are encouraged to imitate and repeat the teacher's instruction. This repetition is done, for example, when the teacher teaches pronunciation in the TEYL classroom, as described in the article R10,

> "*..the teacher pronounces the vocabulary correctly three times and the teacher asks students to recite the new vocabulary five times every vocabulary*." (R10)

In addition, the question-and-answer drill was identified in two studies, namely articles R10 and R11. This drill focuses on the practice of giving accurate responses to the question as quickly as possible, for example as mentioned in the article R11.

> "*After several exercises, students are given English vocabulary questions and the meaning of the vocabulary*." (R11)

Meanwhile, the chain drill was reported in one article, R3, where students engaged in a turn-taking exercise to practice speaking skills. This method provides opportunities for learners to sequentially use target language structures, promoting peer interaction and active participation to enhance communicative competence in English. As stated in the article R3,

> "*They get listening skill from listening to their friends' questions. Therefore, they have to focus on what their friends asking about*." (R3)

The single-slot substitution drill and multiple-slot substitution drill were both identified in the article R14. These drills require students to replace specific element(s) within a given sentence while maintaining grammatical accuracy, thereby enhancing their ability to construct varied sentence patterns. The implementation of the substitution drill is explicitly explained in the article R14 below,

> "*In its application, this technique requires the teacher to provide an example sentence and then ask students to change the sentence into another sentence form. In other words, in short, substitution drill is a method of training (drill) where the teacher gives an example sentence and then asks students to replace one or more words in the sentence*." (R14)

Interestingly, one study in the article R1 introduced snowball drilling to teach vocabulary, which was identified as a combination of multiple drills, specifically the question-and-answer drill and the chain drill. Its implementation is described in the article R1,

> "*A rolling snowball by exercises appoint or gambled for a learner who will answer question one > Learners who get the first turn to answer the question directly answer the correct number, then the students were given the opportunity to answer pointed to one of his friends about the next number. > If the first student gets a chance to answer question one fails, then the students have to answer the next question and so on until the students managed to answer correctly on a number of items about the matter. > If the hoop (round) are still first snowball items unanswered questions, then the questions was answered by students who had a turn*." (R1)

The variations in drilling techniques observed in the selected articles indicate that teachers in the Indonesian EFL context employed different types of drills based on their instructional objectives and learners' needs

3.2. What are the Advantages of Drilling in Indonesian TEYL Context?

Based on the analysis of 14 selected articles, the findings identified four advantages of drilling found in the selected articles, including increasing student engagement and enjoyment, improving vocabulary retention and mastery, enhancing pronunciation and speaking skills, and supporting learning through integrated multimedia. Table 5 summarizes the advantages of drilling employed by the teachers in Indonesian TEYL classrooms below,

Table 5. Advantages of Drilling Code

No	Advantages of Drilling	Article Code	Frequency
1	Increasing engagement and enjoyment	R1, R4, R6, R7, R9, R10, R11, R12, R13	9
2	Improving vocabulary retention and mastery	R5, R6, R10, R11, R12, R1, R2, R8, R13	9
3	Enhancing pronunciation and speaking skills	R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R9, R12, R14	8
4	Supporting learning through integrated multimedia	R6, R7, R11, R13	4

Based on the content analysis of the 14 selected articles, enhancing student engagement and enjoyment in learning emerges as one of the key benefits of drilling. This advantage is highlighted in nine articles (R1, R4, R6, R7, R9, R10, R11, R12, R13), which demonstrate that drilling positively influences students' involvement and fosters an enjoyment in the learning experience in TEYL classrooms. The following statements illustrate that drilling encourages active learning and makes lessons more fun, for example in the article R1 stated,

> "*After the students were given a snowball drilling technique, they became active, controlled vocabulary, and learning became fun*." (R1)

Another key advantage of drilling is to enhance vocabulary retention and mastery. This benefit is demonstrated in nine articles (R5, R6, R10, R11, R12, R1, R2, R8, R13), which significantly improve memorization, recall, and vocabulary usage in TEYL classrooms. These advantages are reflected in the following statement, which highlights that drilling helps students to acquire and master vocabulary over time. The study in the article R5 mentioned,

> "*Through the drilling method, the ability to memorize English vocabulary can be improved*." (R5).

The next advantage of drilling is to improve pronunciation and speaking skills. Evidence from eight articles (R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R9, R12, R14) highlights that drilling significantly contributes to students' fluency, word articulation accuracy, and overall speaking proficiency in TEYL classrooms. This advantage mentioned in several articles, such as the article R7 that emphasizes the impact of drilling under the audio-lingual method on young learners' speaking development, as stated,

"*Drilling under the Audio-Lingual Method is proven as the most influential technique that influenced the significant enhancement towards the early childhoods' English-speaking skill.*" (R7)

Additionally, the article R4 confirms that drilling can overcome mispronunciation in speaking, as mentioned below,

"*They were repeated after the recorder seriously, so that the error in pronunciation could be minimized*." (R4)

Another advantage of drilling is its ability to support learning through integrated multimedia. Evidence from four articles (R6, R7, R11, R13) demonstrates that when drilling is combined with multimedia tools such as videos, songs, and virtual reality (VR), it can enhance students' learning experiences, improves retention, and makes language practice more engaging in TEYL classrooms. Several studies highlight the impact of multimedia-integrated drilling on students' engagement and learning outcomes. As the article R6 mentioned,

"*By using VR media, students were stimulated to learn so that learning objectives can be achieved optimally*." (R6)

It is further explained by stating,

"*Virtual Reality media applied to this research is to provide new learning experiences for children and provide something interesting activitie*s." (R6)

These statements confirm that drilling, when integrated with multimedia, enhances language learning in TEYL classrooms by making repetition-based learning more effective and engaging. The incorporation of technology, music, and video-based learning in drilling can provide students with a more interactive and engaging language learning experience, ultimately improving retention and overall language proficiency.

3.3. What are the Challenges of Drilling in Indonesian TEYL Context?

Based on the analysis of 14 selected articles, there are four challenges of drilling found, including difficulty and error in pronunciation, initial lack of student engagement, initial difficulty in memorizing vocabulary, and boredom for advanced students. Table 6 summarizes the challenges of drilling in TEYL.

Table 6. Challenges of Drilling Code

No	Advantages of Drilling	Article Code	Frequency
1	Difficulty and error in pronunciation	R4, R9, R10	3
2	Initial lack of student engagement	R11, R12	2
3	Initial difficulty in memorizing vocabulary	R12	1
4	Boring for advanced students	R10	1

Based on Table 6, one of the apparent challenges of drilling in TEYL is difficulty and errors in pronunciation, as evidenced by three studies (R4, R9, R10). Article R4 noted,

"*There were some students who still made an error in pronouncing some words in drilling*." (R4)

Similarly, article R9 also stated that,

"*Students have not fully improved in English pronunciation*." (R9)

This statement means that despite repeated practice, certain words remain challenging for students. It indicates that repetition through drilling does not immediately guarantee accurate pronunciation. Additionally, drilling alone may not be sufficient to address persistent pronunciation issues. It suggests that while drilling supports vocabulary acquisition, its effectiveness in improving pronunciation might be enhanced when combining other pronunciation-focused approaches.

Another identified challenge is the initial lack of student participation in drilling activities. As in the article R11 noted,

"*Students are not participating in learning properly, not participating actively in learning*." (R11)

Apart from that, article R12 also stated,

"*Learning at the first meeting of students is still not very active*." (R12)

These findings suggest that some students struggle with active participation, particularly during the early stages of drilling implementation. This lack of engagement may cause low attention to the teacher's explanation or a lack of confidence in pronouncing vocabulary, therefore affecting learning outcomes.

Another challenge is the initial difficulty in memorizing vocabulary, as stated in the article R12,

"*There are still many students who have difficulty memorizing vocabulary.*" (R12)

This indicates that while drilling helps students remember, it may not be effective for all learners, especially those who require alternative reinforcement strategies.

Additionally, feeling boredom among advanced students during drilling implementation is also one of the challenges. It is mentioned in the article R10,

"*This method is dominant in repeating words/sentences, and boring for students who are already smart*." (R10)

It shows that repetitive practice domination in drilling may lead to boredom, particularly for smart students. If not addressed, this could decrease motivation and engagement in learning.

Discussion

3.4. Types of Drilling in Indonesian TEYL Context

The findings reveal six types of drilling applied in 14 selected articles, with the repetition drill being the most dominant, appearing in 11 articles (R2, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10, R11, R12, R13). Other types include question-and-answer drill (R10, R11), chain drill (R3), single-slot substitution drill (R14), multiple-slot substitution drill (R14), and a newly identified type called snowball drilling (R1). The dominance of the repetition drill in Indonesian TEYL classrooms emphasizes habit formation and memorization, the key principles in behaviorist and audio-lingual approaches (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013). This is consistent with findings from articles R5, R6, R8, R10, and R11, which show that the teacher's lead and repetition process can help young learners imitate pronunciation and vocabulary correctly. Similar findings were also stated by Rofi'ah & Huda (2020), who found that drilling improves vocabulary mastery, and by Pratiwi & Simorangkir (2022) and Ambawani & Putranti (2023), who found that repetition drills enhance pronunciation skills. Since introducing new vocabulary is the first fundamental step in language learning for young learners, repetition drills are effective because they emphasize memorization and practice (Hasselbring et al., 1988; Piller & Skillings, 2005). Moreover, as Indonesia is an EFL country, repetition drills can help reduce the lack of language exposure (Albiladi, 2019). This is in line with Willis (2008) and Oktaviani (2018), who emphasized that repetition helps children learn through habituation. Therefore, repetition drills are considered helpful for young learners as it strengthens their memory and builds the foundation for language development.

The combination of single-slot and multiple-slot substitution drills in one session, as found in R14, were used interchangeably in teaching speaking as a scaffolded instructional strategy. In substitution drills, teachers give an example sentence and ask students to replace one or more words. Single-slot substitution involves one cue, while multiple-slot substitution involves more, which makes the task more complex. This aligns with Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2013) explanation that substitution drills train students to recognize and apply grammatical patterns. Using both drills sequentially helps students move from simple to more advanced structures, which matches Cameron (2001) idea that teachers should adjust methods according to learners' needs. Moreover, the introduction of snowball drilling in R1 presents a novel contribution. Based on this study, snowball drilling combines the chain drill and the question-and-answer drill through turn-taking and active participation. The activity involves answering and passing questions among students, which promotes engagement, collaborative learning, and reinforces vocabulary retention through an interactive and dynamic process (Afghari & Khayatan, 2017). This technique aligns with Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2013) and Piller & Skillings (2005), who emphasized questioning as a way to build interaction. Snowball drilling also creates a supportive learning environment, as suggested by Harmer (2001), by maintaining young learners' interest. Thus, this type of drilling can balance repetition, interaction, and collaboration to support both language learning and students' motivation.

Overall, the findings above indicate that the drilling in Indonesian TEYL classes is still mostly based on repetition and a habit-forming process, which are associated with a behaviorist and audio-lingual approach to language learning and teaching. This confirms that the drilling framework proposed by Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2013) remains relevant in the context of EFL instruction. However, the limited variety of drilling used by teachers shows that they rely on familiar techniques rather than exploring innovative forms of drilling. The fact that the category of snowball drilling appeared in the above finding supports the view that the drilling procedure can be modified to be more interactive and student-centered. This suggests that drilling should not be seen as mechanical repetition, but as a flexible technique that can support interaction and engagement in TEYL classrooms.

3.5. The Advantages of Drilling in Indonesian TEYL Context

Most studies mentioned that the benefits of drilling are enhancing student engagement and enjoyment (R1, R4, R6, R7, R9, R10, R11, R12, R13). Repetitive practice combined with interactive elements can help students stay focused and feel motivated. This finding is similar to Halimah et al. (2022) and Pratiwi & Simorangkir (2022), who found that enjoyable activities through drilling-based classrooms make students more active. It is further supported by Harmer (2007), who also emphasized that young learners' motivation depends on engaging and enjoyable activities. This supports the argument that enjoyment in learning is directly related to student engagement. The advantage of drilling also concerns developing pronunciation and speaking skills. Drilling was found to help students improve pronunciation accuracy and speaking fluency (R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R9, R12, R14). Pronunciation, as part of speaking sub-skills (Munawarah et al., 2018), directly affects oral communication competence. It is also supported by Celce-Murcia et al. (2010) and (Brown, 2010) who explained that clear pronunciation supports comprehensibility and fluency. Therefore, drilling can provide structured practice for pronunciation accuracy that can also enhance overall speaking skills.

Several studies also demonstrate that multimedia-supported drilling significantly enhances learning outcomes (R6, R7, R11, R13). The integration of multimedia, such as videos and applications, helps students maintain attention and improves vocabulary learning. Since young learners have short attention spans (Harmer, 2007; Scott & Ytreberg, 1990), multimedia-supported drills make learning more interactive and fun. This finding aligns with Mayer (2005), The Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning,

states that combining verbal and visual elements improves understanding and memory. Thus, multimedia-based drills represent an innovation of traditional methods into more dynamic and engaging learning experiences.

These findings indicate that drilling can be more than a rote learning activity when it is applied appropriately. In Indonesian TEYL classrooms, drilling helps young learners develop their pronunciation, speaking fluency, and motivation, especially when integrated with multimedia and interactive activities. As English exposure is limited in Indonesia, drilling practice helps learners gain considerable input, which is vital for language acquisition. Hence, it can be seen that drilling is still valid and effective in the class, as long as it is adapted to the learners' cognitive and affective needs.

3.6. The Challenges of Drilling in Indonesian TEYL Context

In the early stage of drilling, many students experienced difficulty in memorizing vocabulary (R12). Ghalebi et al. (2021) stated that this is common in the first learning process, and teachers should not expect immediate, perfect results. Teachers need to observe and adjust strategies according to students' needs to overcome this challenge. Another common issue was pronunciation errors, found in R4, R9, and R10. Students often mispronounce some words at the beginning. From the perspective of Ghalebi et al. (2021), it is viewed normal condition in early learning, but it shows the importance of diagnosis and continuous practice (Cameron, 2001). The studies showed that through gradual practice and modified approaches, pronunciation errors can be reduced over time.

Initial disengagement (R11, R12) was also observed, particularly when students have limited attention and get pronunciation difficulty. This aligns with Harmer (2007) and Scott & Ytreberg (1990), who noted that young learners' short attention spans require teachers to create stimulating learning environments. Teachers can address these issues by incorporating multimedia or collaborative tasks, as in Halimah et al. (2022). Finally, boredom among advanced students was mentioned in R10. Repetition drills may feel too easy for them, leading to decreased engagement (Andarbeni, 2010). To prevent this, teachers can mix repetition with other techniques such as question-and-answer or snowball drilling to make the activities more challenging and interactive. This approach aligns with Cameron (2001), who suggested that TEYL activities should be joyful and varied to maintain interest.

The challenges that have emerged in this study have revealed that drilling may not always be effective for teaching if it is used without adaptation. On considering difficulties in memorizing vocabulary, pronunciation errors, lack of engagement, or lack of interest among advanced learners suggests that teachers must adapt their drilling activities for flexible teaching strategies. This suggests that drilling should not be treated as a fixed method. Teachers need to adjust drilling activities by carrying out more than one drilling technique, incorporating multimedia, and adding interaction, to keep learners' interest and accommodate different proficiency levels. This has revealed that teachers play a very significant role in ensuring that drilling effectively supports TEYL classes.

Based on these overall results and discussions, the researchers provide two particular implications. First, the findings of this study are intended to provide educators and curriculum developers with deeper insights into drilling in TEYL in the context of modern teaching. By having a comprehensive understanding of drilling, they can design and implement the drilling well in the current TEYL classrooms. Moreover, by knowing the various types of drilling, the advantages, and the challenges, the educators can develop innovative strategies to maximize the learning outcomes as well as anticipate the potential issues in TEYL. Curriculum developers can innovate drilling by integrating with interactive strategies and supportive media to maximize learning outcomes and address challenges in TEYL for future contexts.

Second, the research outcomes are also expected to contribute to the academic discourse on English teaching methodologies, particularly for Indonesian young learners in the EFL setting. Future research can further explore the dynamics of drilling for various ages, different contexts, and focus on specific English skills (speaking, listening, reading, writing), and contextualize within the current educational curriculum development.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, there are six types of drilling identified in Indonesian TEYL: repetition drill (the most frequently used), question-and-answer drill, chain drill, single-slot drill, multiple-slot drill, and snowball drilling. Furthermore, the advantages found of drilling in Indonesian TEYL are enhancing learner engagement and enjoyment in learning, enhancing vocabulary mastery and retention, improving pronunciation and speaking skills, and supporting learning through integrated multimedia. However, several challenges are also identified, including difficulty and errors in pronunciation, initial student disengagement, initial difficulty in vocabulary memorization, and boredom for advanced students.

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Declarations

Author Contribution Statement

The first author contributed to the conceptualization and design, data collection, data analysis/interpretation, and drafted the manuscript. While the second author plays a role in giving guidance to the study design, the critical revision, and final approval.

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Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study consist of 14 journal articles included in this Systematic Literature Review. The list of the analyzed articles is available within the manuscript. There is no primary data generated in this study.

Declaration of Interests Statement

The author declares no competing interests, either financial or non-financial, or from other parties, that could have influenced the study design, data interpretation, or manuscript preparation.

AI Use Statement

[1] The authors used ChatGPT to support initial drafting and/or structuring of parts of the manuscript. All AI-assisted outputs were critically reviewed, rewritten where necessary, and verified against the study data and cited sources. The authors remain fully accountable for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the manuscript.

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