

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### A. Perception

Everyone needs perception to comprehend various phenomena that exist in our surroundings. Walgito (2004, as cited in Faisal & Carabella, 2023) stated that perception is an organization and interpretation of the stimulus that is sensed so that it is something meaningful, and it is an integrated response within the individual. Someone's perception of an event may be different from others since the perception may be positive or negative. Savitra (2017) mentioned that each individual has their perception of seeing the same thing. Wagner and Hollenbeck (1995, as cited in Savitra, 2017) stated that Selecting, analyzing, storing, and interpreting data obtained by the five senses—hearing, touching, smelling, and tasting—is the process of perception. According to Faisal and Carabella (2023), psychologists believe that the main factor influencing how people perceive and react to stimuli is their perception process. To be short, perception is subjective views from someone towards an event or phenomenon that happened around them and affected their behavior.

#### 1. Factors That Affect Perception

According to Walgito, 2004, several factors play a role for someone to achieve perception:

a. Object of perception

A stimulus is produced by the object and is received by receptors or sensory organs. Both external and internal stimuli that directly impact the receiving nerves that function as receptors can affect the person experiencing the stimulus. Nevertheless, the majority of the stimulus originates from outside the person.

b. Sensory organs, nerves, and nerve centers

The sensory device or receptor is a tool to receive stimuli. In addition, there must also be a sensory nerve as a means of continuing the stimulus received by the receptor to the center of the nervous system, namely the brain as the center of consciousness. As a tool for holding a response, a motor nerve is needed.

c. Attention

The first stage of preparation for holding a perception is to recognize or hold it. This is known as necessary attention. The concentration of all individual activities directed toward an object or collection of objects is known as attention.

He summed up that perception is the result of a combination of factors that include the following: (1) the stimulus or object being perceived; (2) the physiological requirements of the sensory organs, nerves, and nerve centers; and (3) the psychological condition of attention (Walgito, 2004).

## 2. The Process of Perception

Walgito, 2004, mentioned that the process of perception is as follows. The physical or natural process of a stimulus reaching the sense organs occurs. The sensory nerves send the stimulus that the sense organs receive to the brain. We call this process physiological processes. Subsequently, the brain functions as the center of consciousness, facilitating the awareness of what people see, hear, or touch. The psychological process is the activity that takes place in the brain or in the center of consciousness. as a mental process. Consequently, it may be said that the realization of what is seen, heard, or felt – that is, the stimulus received through the sense organs – is the final stage of the process of perception. This is the actual perception process, and it is the last one. People can respond in different ways based on how they see things.

Based on the information above, investigating teachers' perceptions of English teaching practice in the Merdeka Curriculum is essential to answer the research question.

### **B. English Language Teaching in Merdeka Curriculum**

The Curriculum currently in use in Indonesia is the Merdeka Curriculum, which modifies the teaching of subjects, particularly English in elementary schools. The importance of English was mentioned by Nadiem Makarim during his podcast with Gita Wirjawan. Nadiem said that 'if Indonesians have English language skills, it will be a game-changing. It's not an easy task, but we – the Minister of Education and Culture (henceforth –

MoEC) – are working on it.’ (Gita Wirjawan, 2023, 0:50:34). However, the 2013 curriculum eliminated English subjects for elementary schools because students should sharpen their mother tongue before learning a foreign language (Pujiani & Sah, 2023). Following the transition from the 2013 Curriculum curriculum to the Merdeka Curriculum, English was once more designated as an elective material.

Rules and regulations must be followed when putting an education – namely curriculum – into practice for it to function properly (Martin & Simanjorang, 2022). Additionally, Mantra, et al., 2022 mentioned that the curriculum is essential to education's success, thus the government must create it in line with current trends. When implementing the curriculum, educators are the key to success because they are the ones who apply it in the class (Widiastuti, et al., 2013 as cited in Mantra, et al., 2022). Due to differences in policies, learning objectives, teaching strategies, teaching materials, and assessments between the current and previous curricula, teachers frequently struggle to adjust to changes in the curriculum. The researcher discussed these elements in this section; these were subsequently used as questionnaire aspects in this investigation.

#### 1. Policy of Merdeka Curriculum

Curriculum modifications may result in adjustments to policies. The results of PISA, or the Program for International Student Assessment, are one of the many variables that can lead to changes in the curriculum and procedures. Since 2000, Indonesia has participated in PISA, an initiative

started by members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), intending to develop human resources with the necessary skills for the global market (Pratiwi, 2019). According to the factsheet from the OECD website, Indonesian students' performance gradually increased since Indonesia joined the OECD in 2001 but since 2018 performance for all categories – reading, math, and science – started to drop (OECD, 2022). Pratiwi (2019) stated that to answer PISA's results, Indonesia needs to reform its curriculum which is the core of the education system. According to the MoEC Indonesia PISA's 2022 results depict that 70% of 15-year-old students fall below minimum competency in comprehending simple reading or applying basic math concepts (Kemendikbudristek, 2024). Additionally, they mentioned that the PISA results for Indonesia have not seen a significant increase in the last ten to fifteen years and it is worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic (Kemendikbudristek, 2024). Thus, the Merdeka Curriculum is applied to the current curriculum. The policies – teaching method, assessment, teaching material, and the entire school administration – will change due to this curriculum change. Therefore, educators and schools should adapt to the changes as soon as possible to give good teaching practices.

The changing curriculum also affects when English is taught in Indonesian education. Indonesia has applied English subjects that started in elementary school since 1994 and is treated as local subjects (Larasati, 2022). However, according to the Government Regulation No. 67 of 2013

on Basic Framework and Structure of Primary School/Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Curriculum, English subjects were removed from elementary school so that students start getting English subjects from junior high school. This caused many teachers to struggle to teach English because students did not have the basics of the language (Pujiani & Sah, 2023). In the Merdeka Curriculum, English is re-implemented as a local subject in elementary school and will become a compulsory subject in the 2027/2028 academic year (Government Regulation No. 12 of 2022 on Curriculum in Early Childhood Education, Primary Education, and Secondary Education). This change caused some elementary schools not to have EFL teachers because of the absence of English subjects in elementary schools. Thus, regional governments are responsible for supporting the transition process by providing English teachers in primary schools during the period (Government Regulation No. 12 of 2022 on Curriculum in Early Childhood Education, Primary Education, and Secondary Education).

In this curriculum, there is an assessment policy that is discussed by teachers. The graduation and grade promotion mechanism is the subject of this policy. Differentiated learning, as described in the Learning and Assessment Guidebook (Buku Panduan Pembelajaran dan Asesmen, 2022), is the primary method used in the Merdeka Curriculum to enable students to progress alongside their peers despite not having achieved the competencies outlined in the previous phase's learning outcomes. According to this clause, teachers are supposed to work with the teacher of the prior

class if any students do not meet the requirements. Two illustrations from the Learning and Assessment Guidebook (2022) are provided for further information.

Illustration 1 - Grade increase but still in the same phase:

Phase B is the same for grades 3 and 4 in primary school. The grade 3 teacher must collaborate with the grade 4 teacher to modify the needs of the learners—in this case, the learning materials—because some grade 3 students have advanced to grade 4 despite not meeting the learning objectives in grade 3. Teachers are advised to perform an initial assessment at the start of the school year to determine the readiness of their students.

Illustration 2 - Grade promotion at different phases:

When a student from grade four (phase B) is advanced to grade five (phase C) without having completed the prior learning objectives, the grade five teacher should help the student review the ideas or content from the previous grade before the student learns the content from phase C. This eliminates any concern about falling behind as the student moves on to the next grade. The learner can proceed to the subsequent grade without having to worry about falling behind in this way.

Based on these two examples, it can be said that even if a student has not met the requirements for the previous grade, they can still move up in grade or phase provided the teacher helps them catch up on the material. For English subjects that were re-implemented in this curriculum for elementary schools, it will be hard for teachers to control students'

comprehension of this subject. The reason behind this is the lack of teachers who can teach English while this subject is implemented again in Elementary schools. There will be some teachers who agree with this concern, while others do not. Thus, the researcher is interested in investigating teachers' perceptions of English teaching practice for elementary schools related to this issue.

## 2. Learning Goals

Beginning with the Foundation phase of early childhood education, students must attain learning outcomes, or learning competencies, at every stage of their development. The competencies and material coverage included in the Learning Outcomes are arranged in a narrative format for completeness. All subjects, including English, have learning objectives in primary school (phases A–C). There are learning outcomes for each phase of elementary school, and the following provides specific information on each learning objective for each English lesson from phases A to C according to *Platform Merdeka Mengajar (PMM)*.

By the end of Phase A, learners understand that spoken English can help them interact with others in everyday social situations and classroom contexts. In developing listening and speaking skills, learners follow/respond to simple instructions or questions in English and pronounce simple vocabulary well. In Phase A, learners make extensive use of visual aids and non-verbal communication to help them communicate. Learners understand that reading is an individual or group activity that can be done

for pleasure. They understand that pictures in books read by the teacher or pictures that learners observe have meaning. They respond with oral, visual, and/or non-verbal communication to simple texts that are read or pictures that they see.

By the end of Phase B, students are able to comprehend and react to basic spoken and written English texts. As they hone their speaking and listening abilities, students follow along with basic instructions or questions in English and exchange information using basic vocabulary. Learners use visual aids and nonverbal cues to respond to a range of basic oral and written texts and images. Learners can converse in basic English during Phase B.

By the end of Phase C, learners understand and respond to simple spoken, written, and visual texts in English. They use simple English to interact and communicate in familiar/familiar/routine situations. Learners understand letter-sound relationships in simple English vocabulary and use this understanding to comprehend and produce simple written and visual texts in English with the help of examples.

### 3. Teaching Models

States and schools are under pressure to make sure that English language learners' instructional methods are effective and that these students make substantial academic progress annually due to the increasing number of these students (Moughamian et al., 2009). Thus, teaching models are important in second language learning (Chanot, 2005). The provision of the learning resources that students require can be aided by selecting the

appropriate teaching strategy. According to multiple researchers, the concept of learning methods is explained as follows.

a. Problem-Based Learning (PBL)

Problem-Based Learning Problem-based learning is an approach to education that emphasizes students' ability to think critically and actively solve problems at all times (Magdalena et al., 2024). The complexity of the problems students encounter determines the learning process that they go through. By analyzing their existing knowledge and learning experiences, this method helps students acquire new information. Subsequently, they establish a connection between their existing knowledge and the learning challenges assigned by their educators. This problem-based learning approach was essentially created to give students an educational experience. The ability to evaluate student-provided learning materials independently is given priority in this learning process. Students can develop their critical thinking skills by solving real-world problems. Next, learn how to solve problems on your own and acquire knowledge.

For example in the elementary school context, teachers may use this model using phone addiction as a topic. Firstly, the teacher will introduce about phone addiction that happens around us and explain why is it dangerous. Secondly, the teacher asks the students to submit about what can they do to avoid addiction to smartphone in English. Lastly, students present the results in front of the class. By doing so,

students productive skills – writing and speaking – are developed during the process.

b. Project-based Learning (PjBL)

Essentially, there is only a slight difference between PBL and PjBL. Both of them require students' active participation, but PBL emphasizes the development of learners' critical thinking while PjBL focuses on students' practical skills (Magdalena et al., 2024). Magdalena et al., (2024) also add that despite the different focus between PBL and PjBL, both of them have a good impact on the students in terms of solving problems and adapting in real life respectively.

As an example for elementary school context, teachers may conduct a wall magazine project. The teacher asks students to fill the wall magazine with some information, it can be news, facts, or school achievements prepared in brief by the teacher in Bahasa Indonesia. Students then provide more information about it and write it in English.

c. Discovery Learning

Discovery learning is a technique for developing an active learning style by conducting your own research and gathering information so that the results are retained, according to Hosnan (2016, as cited in Prasetyo and Abduh, 2021). This teaching approach helps students improve their analytical and problem-solving abilities. Prasetyo and Abduh, (2021) stated that the discovery learning model

has three main features: (1) concentrating on students; (2) combining new and pre-existing knowledge through activities; and (3) using problem-solving and exploration to form, combine, and announce knowledge.

#### 4. Teaching Materials

One of the most crucial components of a curriculum is the teaching material, or what we will instruct students in. Teachers and schools in isolated locations frequently struggle to get both digital and physical teaching resources. To address this, the Ministry of Education and Culture offers the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM), which is available to all Indonesian teachers at all times for administrative needs, personal growth, and searching for motivational videos. The 'Teaching Tools' menu on PMM provides free access to teaching materials for the Merdeka Curriculum. Not only do government-issue textbooks make up the teaching resources offered by the platform, but it also hosts free educational materials created by other educators. Educators can use this platform to create educational resources that other educators can use or to freely access the resources they need.

In addition to the textbooks available from the government through book distribution or downloaded from the PMM, teachers can also use Student Worksheets. LKS is one of the printed teaching materials that is systematically arranged and contains sheets but its thickness is not as thick as a book and usually contains a summary of material that is attractively

packaged and accompanied by instructions for working on it and there are also tasks and practice questions (Anggraeni, 2021).

## 5. Assessment

According to the MoEC, assessment is the process of collecting and processing information to determine the learning needs, development, and achievement of student learning outcomes, the results of which are then used as material for reflection and the basis for improving the quality of learning. According to Budiono (2023), there are three types of assessment.

### a. Diagnostic Assessment

The purpose of the diagnostic evaluation was to identify the initial conditions of the students and diagnose their fundamental abilities (Komalawati, 2020 as cited in Nasution, 2021). Komalawati (2020, as cited in Nasution, 2021) also adds that there are two categories of diagnostic assessment namely Cognitive Diagnostic Assessment which aims to research students' background –psychology, activity, family condition, and learning style of the students – and Non-Cognitive Diagnostic Assessment that focuses on students' grades and abilities at school.

### b. Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is a process that provides a critical link between standards, curriculum, and teaching (Simanjuntak, 2019). Simanjuntak (2019) also adds that formative assessment is the method

teachers employ to gather and apply assessment data for each student's unique needs. From formative assessment results, educators get information about the need to improve learning the next day by designing positive, supportive, and meaningful learning. The characteristics of formative assessment are integrated into the learning process, involve learners in the implementation, and pay attention to the progress of students' mastery in various domains.

c. Summative Assessment

In order to measure the achievement of student learning outcomes in a given time period based on the learning achievement criteria set by the educator, a summative assessment can be done at the end of the semester. The characteristics of this assessment are held at the end of the learning process – at the end of material, semester, or academic year –, the implementation is formal, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the learning process.

**C. Previous Study**

Several studies related to the topic have been conducted and revealed several results. During this section, the researcher discussed several of those studies and discussed the research gap in each one of these studies.

The first is a study conducted by Jannah and Rasyid (2023). This study examines the perceptions of Early Childhood Education (known as *PAUD*) teachers towards the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in *PAUD* using a descriptive qualitative method with a case study research type.

According to the study's findings and conclusions, PAUD teachers understand the Merdeka Curriculum to mean that it can help children develop their interests and talents, which benefits both teachers and students by allowing them to be more flexible and adapt to their surroundings. Additionally, the curriculum offers teaching tools that can lessen workloads and maximize learning, allowing teachers to fulfill their roles as module designers and facilitators of learning optimally. To implement the Merdeka Curriculum, PAUD teachers believe that institutions and teachers must be able to raise the level of educator competency.

The second is research from Oktavia et al. (2023) that aimed to investigate the need for schools to implement English language teaching in elementary schools that refer to the Merdeka Curriculum. Interviews and the distribution of a questionnaire with open-ended questions were used to conduct this qualitative study. According to the findings of the interviews and the responses provided by the interviewees to open-ended questionnaires, the school has been using the Merdeka Curriculum since 2022. The whole school is very enthusiastic and highly motivated towards the implementation of English language teaching in primary schools. However, the school needs several important things to implement English language teaching effectively, such as the need for English language teachers in primary schools, the need for English language training for primary school teachers, and the fulfillment of facilities that can support teaching activities, especially teaching media and English language learning media.

Last but not least research by Kaltsum et al. (2015). This study aims to investigate the attitudes of primary school English teachers towards the government policy on the implementation of English subjects in elementary schools. The research was focused on 20 English teachers in elementary schools in Surakarta and respondents were divided into two groups of teachers who have educational backgrounds in English and non-English language and then divided into four categories: teachers who have an English background with teaching experience less than ten years, teachers with an educational background in English with teaching experience more than ten years, teachers with backgrounds non-English with teaching experience less than ten years, and teachers with backgrounds non-English with teaching experiences more than ten years. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation. The four categories of teachers exhibit sympathetic nerve responses, indicating that they share the perception of embodying government policy, albeit to varying degrees depending on the actual practice of teaching in the field. Two categories can be made out of the behavioral responses of these four teacher categories: 1. Two groups of idealists are involved in the elementary school English teaching process: 1) actively working to bring hope through professional English instruction, and 2) passively carrying out the process using rudimentary methods.

#### **D. Research Gaps**

This study filled in at least three gaps from the preceding research mentioned in the previous section. The first research was conducted by Jannah

and Rasyid (2023), who used Early Childhood Education as their focus while in this research the researcher used elementary school as the focus of the research because of the changes of policy that make English subjects reinstructed from elementary school. The second research (Oktavia et al., 2023) used a questionnaire with open-ended questions while this research used a questionnaire with close-ended questions to collect data because the researcher wanted to scale participants' responses from numerical data. The last research (Kaltsum et al., 2015) used the 2013 curriculum as the focus of the study while this study uses the Merdeka Curriculum which is the ongoing curriculum in Indonesia.

