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UNDERSTANDING EFL STUDENTS' READINESS FOR ENGLISH LEARNING: PRIMARY TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES IN INDONESIA'S DEEP LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

The implementation of the deep learning approach in Indonesian primary education requires students to be adequately prepared to engage in meaningful and active learning experiences. Although previous studies have examined students' readiness and teachers' readiness separately, limited research has explored how primary school English teachers perceive students' readiness for English learning within the deep learning context. This study investigated teachers' perspectives on EFL students' readiness and the factors influencing it in Indonesian primary schools. A qualitative case study was conducted involving four English teachers from public primary schools across four regions of Jakarta who had two to ten years of teaching experience and were actively teaching during the study. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that students' readiness was influenced by prior knowledge, learning enthusiasm, and environmental support. However, anxiety, low motivation, and limited exposure to English often hindered their readiness. To address these challenges, teachers employed interactive learning media and collaborative activities to enhance students' engagement, confidence, and participation. These findings contribute to a better understanding of students' readiness within the deep learning framework and provide practical insights for English teachers, schools, and curriculum developers in supporting effective English learning at the primary level.

Keywords: Deep Learning, EFL Students' Readiness, Elementary School, English Language Learning, Teachers' Perspectives.

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, English learning has become highly important in preparing young learners for future academic demands and international communication, reflecting the global vision that English serves as a language of instruction and a means of participating in education and the global workforce (Arthi & Gandhimathi, 2025; Paschal & Gougou, 2022). Therefore, Early English Learning (EEL) is often perceived as a crucial component of national language policy in many countries, including Indonesia, where English serves as a foreign language (EFL). S. Chen et al. (2022) stated that age is a crucial factor to acquire language, and children might reach mastery higher than the later age. According to Tran & Thanh

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(2021), children who are in the golden age (approximately from three to under eighteen years old) acquire new languages more easily, particularly in terms of vocabulary and pronunciation, which makes them sound more native-like than people who start outside their golden age.

In Indonesia, English will be shifted from a local content to a compulsory subject under the national curriculum in primary level after the removal in K-13. Accordingly, Permendikbudristek No. 13 of 2025 stated that English will be implemented as a compulsory subject in elementary schools starting from the 2027/2028 academic year, reflecting a shift in educational priorities and recognizing the importance of English in the global context. This new policy represents a stronger national commitment to early English language education, requiring schools and teachers to systematically incorporate English into the formal curriculum. Consequently, this shift not only increases the demand for qualified teachers and appropriate learning resources, but also raises concerns regarding students' preparedness to engage with English learning from an early stage.

However, the implementation of this policy might face some challenges, specifically when it is combined with the deep learning approach in the current curriculum. The diversity of students' backgrounds in Indonesian primary schools, including the distinction in prior exposure to English, motivation, and learning support, produces varying levels of readiness among learners (Muslimin & Khan, 2024; Mutmainah et al., 2023; Saputri et al., 2023). In the classroom, some students may seem confident, while others may struggle with basic comprehension in learning English as a foreign language. Therefore, understanding how teachers perceive students' readiness becomes essential, as teachers' interpretations affect how they respond and address to these differences in classroom practices.

Students' readiness refers to learners' preparedness to engage in learning activities and acquire new knowledge effectively. It encompasses various personal factors, including prior experiences, behavioral tendencies, and individual backgrounds that may influence learning outcomes (Chorrojprasert, 2020; Dai et al., 2020). Students' readiness also involves cognitive, emotional, and motivational aspects, which align with the three types of engagement described by Park & Yun (2018). In EFL contexts, cognitive readiness is reflected in students' ability to sustain attention, monitor their learning process, and complete learning tasks without experiencing excessive cognitive load (Sun & Wu, 2026; Tagle et al., 2024). Cognitive readiness is closely linked to student engagement. Learning activities that encourage behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement help students focus more effectively on linguistic features and facilitate the language acquisition process (Mohamadi, 2017).

Moreover, emotional readiness refers to learners' affective readiness, including their ability to manage anxiety, possess self-confidence, and maintain motivation. This dimension of readiness is particularly important in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning because students who are emotionally ready are generally more confident in using English and more willing to participate in communicative activities. Supporting this view,

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Zadorozhnyy and Lee (2023) found that self-efficacy beliefs play a significant role in fostering students' willingness to communicate, while a learning environment that reduces anxiety can strengthen students' self-confidence in using English. Motivation is also a key component in determining successful learning outcomes in educational settings (Kim and Frick, 2011, as cited in Prijambodo & Lie, 2021). Conversely, low motivation can hinder the development of language proficiency and overall academic achievement (Pratiwi et al., 2023).

In addition to cognitive and emotional readiness, students' readiness is also influenced by environmental factors. A supportive learning environment can enhance students' participation, confidence, and opportunities to practice the target language, thereby facilitating more effective language learning. Every student might come from a different background but they are gathered in one classroom; therefore, it is important for teachers to build a supportive classroom climate before starting English lessons in order to maximize learning achievement. Teachers need to create classroom enjoyment so that students can engage in activities without feeling anxious or pressured. A positive and joyful classroom environment has been shown to be an important factor for learners' willingness to communicate in the L2, which can support their readiness to participate actively in English learning (Lee, 2022). Furthermore, students' readiness has been shown to influence how effectively learners process input, retain knowledge, and participate in classroom activities (Guerra Ayala et al., 2025; Nuraini & Hidayatullah, 2024).

In this condition, teachers' perceptions play a crucial role in identifying and responding to students' readiness in the classroom. Perception is often defined as the process by which the brain interprets information from the surrounding environment by integrating current sensory input with prior knowledge, expectations, and past experiences (de Lange et al., 2018). In the classroom, teachers' perception of students' readiness is shaped in a similar way, as teachers continuously combine what they observe in students' behavior with their prior experiences and beliefs about learning to decide whether students appear ready to participate in certain English learning activities.

As classroom practitioners, teachers are responsible for designing the learning process, managing classroom interactions, and adapting teaching strategies to meet students' necessities (Aksın & Yaşar, 2024; Moon, 2023). Teachers' perception of students' readiness can influence how they provide feedback and scaffold learning. When teachers perceive students as capable and progressing, they may offer feedback that combines constructive comments with supportive remarks, which can help maintain or strengthen learners' confidence and motivation to participate in English tasks (Ruegg, 2018). Conversely, if teachers perceive students as not yet ready and respond mainly with corrective or negative feedback, this may unintentionally reduce students' affective readiness and willingness to take part in more demanding, deep learning-oriented activities.

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Empirical studies in English language teaching also show that teachers' perceptions do not always align directly with their classroom practices. Yuvayapan (2019), for instance, examined EFL teachers' perceptions and the use of translanguaging in the classroom and found that many teachers expressed positive views about using students' first language (L1) for clarification, building rapport, classroom management, and supporting students with low proficiency; however, they did not frequently implement translanguaging in practice due to institutional expectations and language policies. This discrepancy illustrates that teachers' perceptions are shaped not only by their observations and beliefs about what supports student learning but also by contextual constraints, and that these perceptions guide the extent to which they feel capable of implementing specific pedagogical approaches in their classrooms. Therefore, teachers' perspectives are essential in understanding how readiness is recognized and addressed in real classroom settings, particularly in the context of early English learning.

Furthermore, the current curriculum emphasizes the concept of deep learning, which focuses on meaningful understanding, active participation, and higher-order thinking skills. Deep learning has been recognized as a pedagogical approach that can transform twenty-first century education by fostering mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning experiences that strengthen students' engagement and intrinsic motivation (Masayu Andayanie et al., 2025). The concept of Deep Meaningful Learning (DML) also emphasizes deeper comprehension through engagement and interaction rather than rote memorization (Mystakidis, 2021). Rather than focusing solely on content delivery, the curriculum encourages students to actively construct knowledge through understanding, reflection, and application (Santi et al., 2024). In the context of language learning at the primary level, this approach highlights the importance of students' engagement, interaction, and readiness to use language meaningfully in learning activities.

Meaningful learning and active students' engagement are the key principles emphasized in the Deep Learning approach. David Ausubel's (1968) stated that meaningful learning means where they have prior knowledge and can be bridged to new knowledge. Hakkarainen et al. (2007) explain that meaningful learning occurs when students actively construct knowledge through engagement, interaction, and reflection. In the context of English learning at the primary level, meaningful learning supports students' readiness by connecting learning activities with their daily experiences and learning needs. Furthermore, active engagement involves students' participation in classroom interaction, practice activities, and collaborative tasks. In deep learning implementations, students' active engagement is enhanced through interactive and collaborative pedagogies, which contribute to meaningful educational experiences and the development of 21st century competencies (Apriliyana, 2025). Consequently, the success of deep learning largely depends on students'

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ability to actively engage in the learning process, which is closely related to their level of readiness.

Previous research has highlighted the importance of readiness for the successful implementation of English language learning at the elementary school level. From the students' perspective, readiness has been linked to self-directed learning motivation and a supportive learning environment, which facilitate participation in English language learning (Ananda, 2022). Meanwhile, research focusing on teachers has emphasized curriculum knowledge, pedagogical skills, and institutional support as key factors influencing teachers' readiness to implement English language learning (Bulan et al., 2025). However, these studies tend to examine student readiness and teacher readiness separately. Limited attention to how teachers perceive student readiness in English language learning, particularly regarding the implementation of Deep Learning, which requires students to engage actively, think critically, and build meaningful understanding. Consequently, the relationship between teachers' perceptions, student readiness, and Deep Learning practices in EFL classrooms at Indonesian elementary schools remains underexplored. Hence, this study addresses the following research question: How do primary school teachers perceive students' readiness for English learning in relation to the implementation of the Deep Learning approach in Indonesia?

METHODS

This research employed a case study qualitative design. This study used a qualitative case study design to explore teachers' perceptions of students' readiness for English learning at primary level, grounded in Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development and Bruner's scaffolding to interpret how teachers adapt the support for learners advancing in language skills (Avelino & Ismail, 2021; Bilan, 2024). Moreover, the study adopts a teacher-beliefs perspective to examine how educators perceive of readiness shapes instructional decisions and feedback practices in English primary classroom (Itmeizeh & Ibnian, 2022; Petryk & Hapon, 2022).

The participants of this study were four English teachers from public primary schools in Jakarta, representing four different regions: East, South, West, and Central Jakarta. Purposive sampling was employed to select participants who met specific criteria. The participants were English teachers from public primary schools in Jakarta who had between two and ten years of teaching experience and were actively teaching during the implementation of Deep Learning and recent curriculum reforms. This range of teaching experience was considered appropriate because it allowed participants to reflect on both prior and current teaching practices while adapting to curriculum changes.

The research used two instruments for collecting the data. First instrument was observation. Classroom observations were conducted to examine students' participation, engagement, classroom interactions, and teachers' instructional practices related to students' readiness. The researcher was engaged in respondents' teaching class to explore

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directly the real students' readiness situation in the classroom. Classroom observation was conducted using a structured observation checklist. The checklist was designed to assess students' readiness based on several key aspects, including cognitive readiness, affective readiness, students' engagement, and deep learning indicators. The observation was lasted for four meetings.

And the second instrument was semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interview was conducted to explore participants' perceptions regarding their students' readiness to prepare before obtaining the upcoming policy where English will be a compulsory subject. The semi-structured interview consisted of seven guiding questions adapted from Ananda (2022). The interview questions explored various aspects of students' readiness, including students' characteristics, preparation before learning, participation, motivation, challenges, and teachers' strategies in supporting readiness. This structure allowed the researcher to obtain comprehensive insights into teachers' perceptions while maintaining flexibility for participants to elaborate on their experiences. Each interview lasted approximately 15-30 minutes and was audio-recorded with participants' consent for further analysis.

Moreover, the data obtained from the interviews were analyzed using qualitative thematic analysis as proposed by Braun & Clarke (2006). The analysis followed several stages. First, the audio recordings were transcribed into written form. Then, the researcher read the transcripts repeatedly to become familiar with the data and to identify meaningful aspects related to teachers' perceptions of students' readiness and the factors influencing it. Furthermore, the data were coded and classified into categories, which were further developed into broader themes, such as teachers' understanding of students' readiness, classroom indicators of readiness, influencing factors, and teachers' strategies. Finally, the identified themes were interpreted and described in a narrative form, supported by excerpts from the interview data, in order to answer the research questions.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, data triangulation was employed by comparing information obtained from semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The use of multiple data sources enabled the researcher to verify the consistency of the findings and gain a more comprehensive understanding of teachers' perspectives on students' readiness for English learning. Furthermore, interview transcripts and observation notes were reviewed repeatedly during the analysis process to ensure that the identified themes accurately reflected participants' experiences and viewpoints.

RESULTS

This section presents the teachers' perceptions of their students' readiness in English learning that were collected across Jakarta and supported by classroom observations. The results are organized into three themes: (1) EFL Students' Readiness, (2) The Challenges of Students' Readiness, (3) Teachers' Strategy to Boost Students' Readiness

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EFL Students' Readiness

The findings based on respondents' statements defined students' readiness as something depended on their prior knowledge, enthusiasm, and environmental factor. In this context, teachers mentioned that students who possessed an adequate knowledge before learning English in the class show readiness and engagement more in English learning. R1 stated that in her class, only two students who join an extra English class outside of the school, and they have more comprehension regarding the material taught by the teacher.

"For their readiness from 25 students, only 2 that take English course, and the others started from zero. Indeed, those 2 have understood what would I teach". (R1)

Moreover, R3 also emphasized the importance of conducting a pre-test before teaching. According to R3, teachers need to measure students' abilities before introducing the material in order to identify students' vocabulary mastery and understanding levels.

"Before starting a lesson, I usually conduct a pre-test to identify students' vocabulary mastery and determine how much they already know about the topic." (R3)

During classroom observation in R4's class, the researcher also found that students who were more frequently exposed to English demonstrated higher classroom participation and better learning outcomes. Similarly, in R3's classroom, several students were able to transform Indonesian sentences into English, indicating that they possessed sufficient prior linguistic knowledge to participate in classroom tasks. Therefore, prior knowledge can be considered one of the most influential factors in determining students' readiness in English learning. These findings suggest that students who possessed prior English exposure were better prepared to comprehend classroom instructions and engage in learning activities.

The second factor highlighted by teachers was students' enthusiasm toward English learning. All respondents agreed that students who showed high enthusiasm toward English learning tended to be more ready than those with lower interest. R1 explained that students' readiness could be recognized through their excitement during classroom activities. Similarly, R4 stated that students who were more enthusiastic generally achieved better learning outcomes than those who were less interested.

"It's really impactful. Because if they are excited, they will more easily get the knowledge" (R3)

The classroom observations also supported this finding. In all four classrooms, most students actively participated in learning activities, remained focused during the lessons, and responded to teachers' questions, although a few students remained silent during classroom discussions. Students showed particularly high engagement during collaborative and meaningful learning activities. For example, students worked in groups to identify superlative words from a text, classified traditional and modern transportation, created sentences using transportation vocabulary, and guessed transportation categories from pictures drawn on the whiteboard. These activities encouraged students to participate actively rather than passively receive information.

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"Students who are enthusiastic usually achieve better learning outcomes because they are more willing to participate during the lesson." (R4)

However, R2 pointed out that readiness could not solely be identified through students' visible excitement. Some students who showed low engagement during classroom activities were still able to achieve high learning outcomes. Therefore, factors such as personality might influence students' willingness to participate actively during the learning process. These findings suggest that visible participation alone may not fully reflect students' readiness, as some students demonstrated adequate understanding even though they were less verbally active during classroom interactions.

In addition, teacher mentioned external factors such as students' family backgrounds also contributed to their readiness in English learning. Students who came from educated families were perceived to have more learning support and exposure compared to those who did not. R4 emphasized the importance of family background as one of the key factors influencing students' readiness. According to him, every student comes from different learning environments and receives different levels of exposure before learning English at school. Therefore, students' backgrounds influenced the success of their learning process.

"Every student comes from a different family background. Some receive support from home, while others only learn English at school, so their readiness is also different." (R4)

Although family background could not be directly observed during classroom observations, differences in students' English proficiency were evident. Some students were able to respond confidently using simple English expressions and complete classroom tasks with minimal guidance, whereas others relied more heavily on teachers' explanations in Indonesian. These differences support teachers' perceptions that students entered the classroom with varying levels of English exposure and learning support.

Therefore, the findings indicate that EFL students' readiness is shaped by multiple interconnected factors, including prior knowledge, learning enthusiasm, and environmental support. Students who had previous exposure to English and supportive learning environments tended to demonstrate higher participation, confidence, and comprehension during the learning process. In addition, students' enthusiasm toward English learning was perceived as an important factor that influenced their engagement and learning outcomes. However, the findings also suggest that readiness cannot solely be identified through students' visible participation, since some less active students were still able to achieve satisfactory learning performance. Therefore, students' readiness in English learning can be understood as a complex condition influenced by both internal and external factors.

The Challenges of Students' Readiness

The teachers highlighted several challenges that often hinder students' readiness in English learning. These findings were obtained from interview data and supported by classroom observations. The main challenges identified were anxiety, low motivation, and limited exposure to English.

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Some teachers mentioned that anxiety became one of the most significant obstacles faced by students during English learning. Since English is not students' daily language, many students experienced fear and lack of confidence when they had to use English in the classroom. R4 explained that several students were afraid of making mistakes when speaking English, and some of them even cried during the learning process. During classroom observation in R4's class, the researcher also found that students tended to speak slowly and hesitantly during classroom presentations. Moreover, classroom observations revealed that only some students voluntarily responded to the teacher's questions, while others preferred to remain silent even though they appeared to understand the lesson. Several students were also observed to be less confident when using simple English expressions during classroom activities. These observations support teachers' perceptions that students' anxiety reduced their willingness to communicate in English.

"They are afraid to make mistake, even some of them cried. And if I asked them to speak, they are afraid, afraid to make mistakes" (R4)

The R4 statement was supported by R3:

"They already afraid, because it's not their daily language."

These findings indicate that students' anxiety is primarily related to their fear of making mistakes, rather than to their actual English proficiency. As a result, these emotional barriers limit students' self-confidence and reduce their willingness to actively engage in English language learning activities.

These conditions frequently prevented students from participating confidently in English learning activities and reduced their readiness to engage during the lesson.

Besides anxiety, students' motivation and exposure to English were also identified as major challenges. Teachers perceived that learning motivation played an important role in determining students' willingness to learn English as a foreign language. R2 emphasized that some students showed low learning motivation, which might be influenced by fatigue and lack of interest during classroom learning. Similarly, R3 explained that students' willingness to learn English often needed to be encouraged continuously by the teacher.

"Usually, their willingness to learn English. As an educator, we persuade them to be willing to learn English." (R3)

This perception was also reflected during classroom observations. Although most students remained focused during lessons and participated in classroom activities, only some students actively answered the teacher's questions, while others tended to be passive. These differences show that students exhibit varying levels of motivation and willingness to participate, indicating that ongoing encouragement from the teacher is necessary to maintain student engagement in English language learning.

On the other hand, classroom observations showed that English lessons in the observed schools only lasted approximately 70 minutes and were conducted only once a week. R1 highlighted that because English was taught only once per week, there was limited repetition of the material, causing students to easily forget the previous lessons. As a result,

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limited exposure to English became one of the factors contributing to students' low readiness in English learning.

"Because English is only taught once a week, students usually forget what they learned in the previous meeting." (R1)

In conclusion, the findings reveal that students' readiness in English learning is often hindered by psychological and environmental challenges, particularly anxiety, low motivation, and limited exposure to English. Many students were reported to feel afraid of making mistakes because English is not their daily language, which reduced their confidence and willingness to participate actively during the learning process. In addition, low learning motivation and limited classroom exposure further weakened students' readiness, especially since English lessons were conducted only once a week. These findings suggest that students' readiness is not only influenced by their individual abilities, but also by emotional conditions, learning habits, and the intensity of language exposure provided in both classroom and daily environments.

Teachers' Strategy to Boost Students' Readiness

The findings from interviews and classroom observations revealed that teachers employed various strategies to enhance students' readiness in English learning within the context of deep learning implementation. Among the strategies identified, the use of interactive media and group discussion activities emerged as the most frequently applied approaches across classrooms.

All respondents mentioned that interactive learning media were important to maintain students' engagement during English learning. Since young learners have different characteristics from adult learners, teachers used learning media such as songs, games, audio-visual materials, and attractive worksheets to create a more enjoyable learning atmosphere. R2 explained that songs were frequently used in both lower and upper grades because learning through memorization alone could make students feel pressured and bored.

"If students only memorize vocabulary, they will easily feel bored. Therefore, I usually use songs because they enjoy learning through singing." (R2)

Classroom observations also showed that students were more enthusiastic and actively participated during sing-along activities, guessing games, and vocabulary exercises. R4 also employed songs to the lesson for his students, different from R2 who used songs for every class in primary school, R4 stated that he employed songs only for lower class. Instead, for upper class he gave the students chance to come forward and answer the question because they have learned about grammar, so the students will be more excited when they got chance to answer.

"For lower class usually singing or using media. But for upper class, because they learn about grammar, so they will be more excited if they got chance. But don't judge them if they make mistake" (R4)

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In the other hand, R1 emphasized the use of interactive worksheets and audio-visual media to support students' readiness and participation during the learning process. According to R1, attractive and fun worksheets could help students become more engaged and motivated in learning English, both individually and collaboratively. She explained that combining learning materials with audio-visual media and group-based worksheets could make students more involved in classroom activities rather than becoming passive learners.

> *"By learning in groups, then combining it with media such as audio-visual, and giving interesting and fun worksheets, students become more engaged in the learning." (R1)*

Furthermore, the findings also revealed that group discussion became another important strategy used by teachers to enhance students' readiness in English learning. Teachers believed that collaborative learning activities could help students become more confident and active during classroom interaction. R3 explained that elementary school students tend to enjoy learning through interaction and teamwork. Therefore, group activities and peer tutoring were frequently implemented to support students with lower ability or lower interest in English learning.

> *"Sometimes I ask students who have better ability or higher interest to teach their friends who are less interested or have lower ability. So, peer tutoring and group work are used." (R3)*

Similarly, R1 also stated that group-based learning activities could encourage students to participate more actively during the lesson. Classroom observations supported these findings, showing that students were involved in collaborative activities such as arranging jumbled sentences, classifying vocabulary, and solving simple tasks through group discussion. During these activities, students demonstrated active participation, peer interaction, and simple problem-solving skills, which reflected the implementation of deep learning principles.

Therefore, the findings indicate that interactive media and collaborative learning strategies play an important role in boosting students' readiness in English learning. These strategies not only increased students' enthusiasm and participation, but also supported meaningful engagement, peer interaction, and problem-solving activities aligned with the principles of deep learning.

DISCUSSION

EFL Students' Readiness

The findings indicate that EFL students' readiness is influenced by students' prior knowledge, enthusiasm, and environmental factors. These findings indicate that teachers view student readiness as a multidimensional construct, rather than merely students' initial proficiency in English. From the teachers' perspective, students are considered ready if they possess adequate knowledge, a positive attitude toward learning, and a supportive learning environment that enables them to actively participate during English lessons. These findings complement previous research by showing that teachers' perceptions of readiness

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encompass cognitive, emotional, and environmental dimensions in the implementation of Deep Learning in Indonesian elementary schools.

Prior knowledge provides a promising foundation for learning a new language, supported by evidence that existing linguistic knowledge can serve as a foundation for mastering new grammatical rules and facilitate meaningful exposure to the target language (Gerits & Branden, 2023). As mentioned by the teacher, the students who got English exposure outside of the class will be easy to understand the material taught, because they have learned before it was taught by the teacher. This finding suggests that prior knowledge does not merely help students understand new material more easily, but also enables them to participate more confidently during classroom activities. From the perspective of Deep Learning, prior knowledge allows students to connect previous experiences with newly acquired knowledge, making learning more meaningful rather than relying solely on memorization.

Prior knowledge refers to the totality of experiences, information, skills, and relevant vocabulary that students already possess before learning new material (Aizawa et al., 2023; Farid, 2021). Students who already possessed the insight before learning in the class often show high contribution, since they have known about the material taught. For instance, a study conducted by Ma (2021) investigated the factors affecting students' English language preparedness among freshman students majoring in Elementary Education. The study found that prior knowledge of English, including students' background in vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and previous English learning experiences, contributed to their level of preparedness in learning English. Students who possessed stronger prior knowledge were more likely to demonstrate confidence and readiness in language learning activities. The study concluded that English language preparedness is influenced by multiple factors, with prior knowledge serving as one of the important foundations for successful language learning.

Students' enthusiasm is also an important factor contributing students' readiness. Teachers agreed that students who have better motivation to participate in English class will get upper achievement than who do not. The teachers noted that students' readiness was linked to their enthusiasm for learning, rather than solely to their language proficiency. This suggests that students who are emotionally ready tend to be more actively engaged in classroom interactions and show a greater willingness to participate in English language learning activities. Such engagement aligns with the principles of Deep Learning, which emphasizes meaningful participation and active engagement throughout the learning process.

Motivation plays a crucial role in determining successful learning outcomes in educational settings (Kim and Frick, 2011, as cited in Prijambodo & Lie, 2021). Motivation is often related to students' readiness; students who are more motivated tend to show greater persistence and effort in learning, while less motivated students often achieve lower learning outcomes (Alrabai, 2016; Filgona et al., 2020). The study by Imsa-Ard (2020) in Thailand showed that most of the EFL students are very motivated positively in English learning, either from personal aspect, education, or professional, such as the desire to be fluent, career requirements, and personal's interest. Hence, motivation is an essential point to increase

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students' readiness. The students who get more exposure in motivation will be more ready than students who are unmotivated to learn English as L2. Research in other EFL contexts, including blended learning settings, also shows that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation positively predict students' learning outcomes, with intrinsic interest in English playing a particularly important role, suggesting that higher motivation generally supports learners' readiness to engage in English learning (Peng & Fu, 2021).

Moreover, students' environmental factors also play as a big role determining students' readiness. Teacher believed that students came from different background, but a supportive environment really affect how students obtain the material in the class. This finding is partially supported by Suhirman (2018), who identified parental involvement and parent-school cooperation as important factors affecting the readiness of English teaching and learning. This suggests that support from the family environment may contribute to students' readiness to learn English. However, since students from different backgrounds are brought together in the same classroom, teachers also play an important role in creating a supportive learning environment. Therefore, it is important for teachers to establish a positive classroom climate before starting English lessons in order to maximize learning achievement. Teachers need to create an enjoyable learning atmosphere so that students can engage in activities without feeling anxious or pressured. A positive and joyful classroom environment has been shown to be an important factor influencing learners' willingness to communicate in the L2, which can further support their readiness to participate actively in English learning (Lee, 2022).

The Challenges of Students' Readiness

The findings show that teachers often face anxiety, low motivation, and limited exposure to English as challenges for students to achieve readiness in English learning. These findings indicate that students' readiness is influenced not only by their cognitive abilities but also by psychological and contextual factors that shape their willingness to engage in English language learning. From a teacher's perspective, students may have adequate learning potential, but they tend not to participate actively if their emotional barriers and limited learning opportunities remain unresolved. This underscores that readiness must be viewed as a condition that can be strengthened or weakened by classroom experiences.

Anxiety is described as a subjective emotion that causes nervousness, worry, fear, and self-doubt (F. Chen et al., 2025). In linguistic context, Foreign Language Anxiety is an emotional condition related to foreign language learning process that encompasses fear of negative evaluation, unwillingness to communicate, and concern of making mistake when using English in classroom context, exam, or social interaction (Ahmed et al., 2022; Ibrahim & Hashim, 2021; Oad et al., 2020). The present study found that anxiety hindered students' readiness to learn English, as many students were afraid of making mistakes and hesitated to participate in classroom activities. These findings indicate that students' emotional readiness is a requirement for meaningful participation in English language learning. When students are afraid of making mistakes, they become reluctant to communicate, thereby reducing their opportunities to practice using the target language and build new knowledge through interaction. In the Deep Learning approach, such conditions can limit students'

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active engagement, which is essential for a meaningful learning experience. This finding is consistent with a recent study on Saudi EFL learners, which reported that foreign language anxiety reduced students' confidence, participation, and engagement in English learning. Students who experienced communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and classroom anxiety tended to avoid language practice and showed lower willingness to engage in learning activities (Alshammari, 2025). Similar findings were reported by Mulyono et al. (2019), who found that fear of making mistakes, embarrassment, and negative attitudes contribute to anxiety about speaking a foreign language among students learning English as a foreign language (EFL). The students in that study reported feeling worried about making mistakes when speaking English, which reduced their willingness to communicate and often led them to remain silent during learning activities. These findings further reinforce the results of this study, in which students appeared hesitant and avoided participation due to their fear of making mistakes when using English.

Beside anxiety, teachers also highlighted that low motivation and limited exposure can hinder EFL students' readiness. Motivation has the power to encourage, inspire, guide, and influence a student's attitudes and behavior (Dimyati & Mudjiono, 2006, as cited in Filgona et al., 2020). In second language context, motivation is often divided into two main dimensions: intrinsic (language interest and personal satisfaction), and extrinsic (test score, carrier necessities, and social recognition). The findings of this study indicate that motivation should not be viewed as a fixed characteristic of students, but rather as an aspect that can be developed through teachers' instructional practices. The teachers in this study believed that students often need ongoing encouragement before they are willing to participate in English language learning. These findings reinforce the importance of creating enjoyable and meaningful learning experiences, which is emphasized in the implementation of Deep Learning. The study by Genc et al. (2024) has shown that motivation is one of the most important factors influencing students' readiness for online learning. Students who demonstrate higher motivation tend to be more willing to utilize online resources, participate in learning activities, and manage their learning process effectively. Conversely, low motivation can reduce students' engagement and readiness, making it more difficult for them to adapt to the online English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning environment. Hence, low motivation may negatively affect students' readiness by limiting their willingness to participate actively and engage with learning opportunities.

Another challenge identified by teachers was students' limited exposure to English. In EFL context, there are two kinds of exposure that students can obtain: out-of-class and formal class. These findings reflect the current situation in many elementary schools in Indonesia, where English is generally taught for a limited number of class hours each week. As a result, students have relatively few opportunities to practice English consistently, making it difficult for them to memorize vocabulary and build confidence in using the language. This indicates that teachers need to maximize the quality of classroom interactions so that even with limited exposure, students can still have meaningful learning experiences in line with the principles of Deep Learning. The study by Tsang & Lo (2026) found that the English exposure outside of the class through homework, extra-course, and GIE (General Informal Exposure) affects positively to EFL learners' vocabulary developments. Moreover,

FOSTER JELT
Journal of English Language Teaching

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Vol. 7, No. 3, July 2026
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additional English exposure through extracurricular lessons and out-of-school activities was associated with better language performance, suggesting that greater exposure can provide learners with more opportunities to develop familiarity and competence in English (Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2025). Suhirman (2018) noted that learners often do not have sufficient exposure and opportunities to communicate in English, which may restrict their familiarity with the language and reduce opportunities for meaningful language use. Therefore, limited exposure to English may hinder students to achieve certain level of English learning readiness.

Teachers' Strategy to Boost Students' Readiness

Teachers mentioned several strategies to foster students' readiness before learning English. These strategies are consistent with the current educational approach that emphasizes deep learning. Since deep learning offers meaningful and joyful learning, teachers highlight that interactive media and group discussion are the way to boost readiness. The findings indicate that teachers do not view student readiness as something that develops naturally, but rather as a condition that can be enhanced through appropriate teaching strategies. This suggests that teachers play a crucial role in creating meaningful learning experiences that help students become cognitively, emotionally, and socially ready before beginning to learn English.

Interactive learning media facilitates two-way interactions, involves students directly, and bridges the abstract concept with concrete comprehension through visual, auditory, and kinesthetic elements, as well as immediate feedback (Ningsi & Hartono, 2025). The present study found that teachers frequently used songs, interactive worksheets, and audio-visual materials to enhance students' readiness in English learning. This finding indicates that interactive learning media not only attract students' attention but also encourage them to actively participate throughout the learning process. Such active participation reflects one of the main principles of Deep Learning, where students are expected to construct understanding through meaningful learning experiences rather than merely receiving information passively. This finding is supported by Rahmanu et al. (2023), who revealed that learning media can improve students' motivation, engagement, and comprehension through interactive and multimedia elements. Interactive media help capture learners' interest and encourage active participation in classroom activities, which may contribute to greater readiness for English learning. This finding is consistent with the strategies reported by the teachers, who frequently used songs and interactive learning media to engage students in English learning. Using songs as a vocabulary-learning tool may be more effective than relying solely on conventional memorization activities, as songs can create a more enjoyable learning experience and reduce students' boredom. Furthermore, interactive learning media can encourage students' engagement, participation, and collaboration during classroom activities.

Beside interactive learning media, teachers also highlighted the use of group discussion. Group discussions are considered an effective strategy for encouraging active student participation and collaboration during the English language learning process. This present study found that teachers often employ group work and peer tutoring to help students learn from one another in using English. Through collaborative learning, students

FOSTER JELT
Journal of English Language Teaching

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are encouraged to share ideas, solve problems together, and support peers with lower proficiency or interest in English language learning. These findings are supported by Chang (2024), who reported that discussion activities help EFL learners clarify difficult concepts, increase engagement, and prepare themselves to participate in classroom learning activities. Additionally, group discussions provide opportunities for students to learn from peers and build knowledge collaboratively. These findings align with teacher practices in this study, where students engaged in group-based activities and peer tutoring. Therefore, group discussions can contribute to student readiness by fostering active engagement, communication, and collaborative problem-solving which are important principles of deep learning.

CONCLUSION

This study explores the teachers' perspectives on EFL students' readiness for deep learning in elementary schools. The findings indicate that students' readiness is influenced by several interrelated factors: prior knowledge, enthusiasm for learning, and environmental support. Students who have had prior exposure to English, demonstrate higher motivation, and receive support from their learning environment tend to show greater readiness to participate in English language learning activities. However, teachers also identified several challenges that hinder student readiness, including anxiety about foreign languages, low motivation, and limited exposure to English. To address these challenges, teachers implemented various strategies, particularly through the use of interactive learning media and group discussion activities, which are considered to enhance student engagement, participation, collaboration, and self-confidence during the learning process.

These findings suggest that EFL students' readiness should be viewed as a multidimensional construct influenced by cognitive, affective, and environmental factors. In the context of deep learning, teachers play a crucial role in creating meaningful, engaging, and supportive learning experiences that encourage students to actively participate in English language learning. This study contributes to the developing discussion on the application of Deep Learning in elementary education in Indonesia by presenting empirical evidence from teachers' perspectives on how student readiness is understood, the challenges frequently encountered, and the instructional strategies implemented to foster readiness prior to English language instruction. Referring to existing research, this study highlights the relationship between student readiness and teachers' classroom practices in the context of implementing a Deep Learning approach, thereby enriching the current understanding of how readiness can be fostered through meaningful learning experiences in elementary schools in Indonesia.

These findings also have practical implications for several parties. For teachers, these findings underscore the importance of creating meaningful, enjoyable, and collaborative learning experiences through interactive media and peer-based activities to strengthen students' readiness. And for schools, these findings highlight the need to provide adequate learning resources and a supportive classroom environment that facilitates students' active participation. In the other hand, this study is limited to elementary schools in Jakarta;

FOSTER JELT
Journal of English Language Teaching

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***p*-ISSN: 2776-8880**

therefore, these findings cannot be generalized to represent the readiness of EFL students across Indonesia. Differences in educational resources, school contexts, and student backgrounds may lead to differing perspectives and experiences in other regions. In addition, the study only explored teachers' perspectives and involved a relatively small number of participants; therefore, the findings may not fully represent the experiences of all Indonesian primary school teachers. Future research is recommended to involve participants from various regions in Indonesia and incorporate student perspectives to provide a more comprehensive understanding of EFL students' readiness in the implementation of deep learning.

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