

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

##### **2.1.1 Teaching English as a Foreign Language**

Teaching English as a foreign language is teaching English to students whose first language is not English, and is not used in everyday life. According to Putri & Syafitri (2021), teaching English as a foreign language may also refer to a specific approach to teaching those whose first language is not English. On the other hand, Lin & Chien (2010) argues that TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) focuses on the goals and lessons of English pioneered by teachers and learners of English with different mother tongues. In this case, the lesson or language learned is not a first language but a language that is used as a second language (foreign language) that is only learned at school and not to be used in everyday life.

Teaching English as a foreign language also has several principles that must be considered by a teacher for young learners to be successful. As stated by Gupta (2019), seven principles must be considered, namely:

- 1) Understand your students' goals for learning a second language.
- 2) Build a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom.
- 3) Develop background information.
- 4) Provide comprehensible input or knowledge through vocabulary development.
- 5) Provide plenty of opportunities for discussion and interaction with each other,
- 6) Using various teaching modalities.
- 7) Advanced review and evaluation.

The principles above provide a basis for teachers to develop broader theories when teaching a second language.

In addition, learning English as a foreign language can be successful if it meets several conditions. As stated by Moon (2000, as cited in Nashruddin, 2015), there are five conditions for success in learning English, namely

- 1) Time: English instruction can be spaced out over several years and given to children in their ample free time.
- 2) Exposure: students are surrounded by English inside and outside school.
- 3) A real need for English: People need to use English to function daily, including making friends, studying in class, shopping, traveling, and doing other activities.
- 4) Variety of input: children are exposed to a wide range of spoken and written English usage, as well as English for thinking, engaging, doing tasks, and envisioning.
- 5) Meaningful input: by using English as a medium of communication rather than as a subject to be learned, where the emphasis is on the meaning rather than the form of the language, they will experience a wealth of meaningful linguistic input.

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### **2.1.2 Teaching English to Young Learners**

Young learners are in pre-school to secondary school with an age range of 5-12 years. Butler (2017) Pinter (2011) defines young learners as children aged 5-12. Besides, Pinter creates three categories for young learners. The first group of children begins preschool at around age 3. The second group comprises children who begin primary school at around age 5-7 and finish at around age 11 or 12, though in some places it ends at age 13 or 14. Young learners referred to in this research are those in elementary school-aged 5-12.

Young learners have general characteristics for classroom learning. Brown (2001, as cited in Syakur, 2020) argues that young learners have five

characteristics. The first is that young learners have a limited attention span. To capture the interest of the young learners, the teacher should design an engaging learning method. This could be accomplished using various methods and exercises, including games, songs, and other activities. The second is their high level of activity. By including them in role-plays, conversations, games, and competitions, the teacher may motivate the young learners to participate actively in the learning process. The third is that they take compliments very well. That implies that the teacher can motivate them by complimenting their performance. The fourth is that they enjoy the acquisition process, which includes learning through play. Games should, therefore, be a crucial component of the teaching and learning process for the teacher. The last is their enjoyment of movement, fantasy, and imagination. The teacher should use a teaching and learning method involving the young learners' fantasy, creativity, and movement to encourage them to actively participate during the learning process.

Teaching English to young learners refers to imparting English skills, knowledge, and information to children aged 5-12 years, who are at a critical stage of language development and the capacity to change and redefine their thinking in everyday life as foreign language learners. Hijriati & Mataram (2023) said that teaching English to young learners involves guiding and assisting young learners between the ages of 5 and 12 in their activities of learning, understanding, and comprehending ideas, attitudes, values, skills, and information about English using tricks and strategies that will be used in changing and redefining their thought as they move forward in their daily surroundings as language learners. It involves teaching English as a second or foreign language to children with limited or no prior exposure to the language. This form of language instruction is specifically tailored to accommodate young learners' unique learning needs, abilities, and interests.

Therefore, teachers should consider several things when teaching young learners, especially when teaching English. As Cameron (2001) argues, teachers need to be aware of how their students process information and think in addition to knowledge and ability. Also, they must be able to figure out what young

learners are interested in and utilize it for language education. In addition, teachers should be equipped to teach their young learners literacy in English and deliver the whole lesson orally. Last, teachers should identify problems and difficulties while teaching the language. The objectives of teaching English to young learners go beyond simply imparting the language and information about their potential cultural identities. It is better to introduce young people to the local culture and other cultures so that their knowledge of local and other regions' and countries' cultures emerges earlier. The earlier kids learn about the culture, the more self-aware they are. The teachers can use technology to promote their culture and boost their motivation for learning English.

Teachers must comprehend the traits of young learners. According to Nurkhasanah (2014), the teacher must consider the traits of young learners while choosing the technique to be employed during the teaching and learning process. By studying the peculiarities of young learners, the teacher can use the best strategies.

### **2.1.3 Stages of TEYL**

The stages of teaching English to young learners are closely aligned with the developmental stages of children and their progression in acquiring a new language. Shin and Crandall (2014) outline key stages in Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL), focusing on age-appropriate approaches and strategies to effectively teach English to children. These stages are based on young learners' developmental levels, characteristics, and needs. The main stages include:

1. Early Childhood Stage (Ages 3-6); learners are highly curious and energetic, limited literacy skills in their first language (L1), and have short attention spans and a need physical movement.
2. Primary Stage (Ages 7-12): Increasing cognitive and social development, emerging literacy skills, and the ability to process abstract concepts gradually. They enjoy group activities and games.
3. Pre-Adolescent Stage (Ages 12-15): begin developing abstract thinking and problem-solving skills, desire for independence and identity exploration, and peer influence strengthens.

Each stage emphasizes engaging activities and materials tailored to young learners' developmental and linguistic abilities, ensuring meaningful and enjoyable language acquisition.

#### **2.1.4 Challenges in Teaching English for Young Learners**

Teaching English to young learners is not easy. There are many challenges faced when teaching them. The challenges that arise can come directly from teachers or students. Artini (2017) said young learners can be difficult to educate because they are often distracted, making them restless and making it difficult for them to concentrate on the topic at hand. From this statement, it is clear that the success of teachers in teaching English is the key to the success of their students. Thus, teachers must be able to overcome all challenges that arise.

Besides being easily distracted and difficult to concentrate, Nunan (2010) suggests that there are five challenges when teaching English to young learners: cognitive development, motivation, attention, stratified groups, and assessment. The first is cognitive development. According to Nunan, young learners are in the middle of their psychological and social development, which lasts from childhood through adulthood. Therefore, when designing assignments and materials, teachers must design them according to the level of students they will teach. Next is motivation. In this regard, it is emphasized how important it is to keep students motivated. Nonetheless, some elements have the power to affect students' motivation, namely relevance and objectivity. The third is attention. In this part, we know children have a very limited attention span. In this regard, teachers must be aware of the difficulties experienced by every student that comes from physical and mental disorders called Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). The fourth is stratified groups. Diversity will be present anywhere there are multiple students participating in a learning group. Diversity is frequently thought of in terms of linguistic ability. The last is assessment. The term "assessment" refers to the methods and processes used to gather and examine the language of learners in order to ascertain what they are capable of.

Lynce (2008, as cited in Fajaryani et al, 2018) also said that there are three challenges in teaching and learning English in the classroom. The first is a lack of motivation. In this case, some students may not be interested and dislike English. They find English difficult, are afraid of failing English exams, and choose not to interact in class. Therefore, they need enough motivation from teachers to interact in class and when learning English. The second is insufficient time, resources, and materials. English is a foreign language, which is not as easy to teach and learn as it is to teach a first language. When English is taught as a second language, it will certainly take a long time and need adequate resources and materials to support it. The last is overcrowded classes. In this case, the number of students in a class can range from one student to those who teach in individual private classes. But if in an ordinary class there are many students from 15 people, 20 people, 30 people, 40 people, it can even reach 50 people in one class. A class of students creates several problems, such as discomfort in class, evaluation of class management, maintaining learning effectiveness, lack of focus while studying, etc. These three challenges need to be overcome by teachers to improve the quality of English teaching in the classroom.

## **2.2 Study of Relevant Research**

Previous research has been conducted related to teaching English to young learners. The first is Khulel (2021), who focused on the challenges teachers face when teaching English to young learners at elementary schools located in rural areas. To collect data, this research only used interviews with elementary school teachers. Besides, the result showed that teachers face three challenges. The first is teachers' obstacles in relation to students' socioeconomic status. The second one is the teachers' concerns about the place of English in the national curriculum. And the last is the teachers' challenge in the Covid-19 pandemic. The last research is from Pertiwi et al. (2022), who focused on the portrait of challenges in teaching English to young learners in elementary schools located in a small district in East Java. To collect data, this research only used interviews with elementary school teachers. The results of this research showed that the deep challenges of teaching English arise only from students, such as the lack of

student motivation towards English language learning, students' lack of knowledge of English, a negative perception of English, and lack of speaking courage which makes teachers have to be extra careful in teaching English in the classroom and should apply learning methods as interesting as possible. So, students are more interested in English lessons. Previous research has been limited to only exploring the challenges of teaching English to young learners in rural areas. It is also limited to the use of semi-structured interviews to collect data. To address this void, this research aims to find out the challenges faced by English teachers teaching English in elementary schools in Tasikmalaya city, judging from their experience and way of teaching, and the solutions that each teacher will provide to solve existing problems through semi-structured interviews and observations to obtain more varied data.