



ENGLISH TEACHING RECONSTRUCTION AT INDONESIAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: STUDENTS' POINT OF VIEW

Herli Salim¹⁺

Muhammad Hanif²

^{1,2}Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Indonesia.

¹Email: herlisalim@upi.edu Tel: +62 821-1686-0157

²Email: muhammadhanif@upi.edu Tel: +62 821-3671-0440



(+ Corresponding author)

ABSTRACT

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Indonesia has experienced a resurgence of interest in the English language teaching. English learning is viewed as an essential aspect to build skills of the youth. In order to keep abreast of these demands, a lot of curricular and pedagogical changes have been made in teaching programs and formal education setting. This research investigated the reconstructing patterns of English Teaching after the implementation of the New 2013 curriculum in the Indonesian elementary schools from students' point of view. The sample of this qualitative study constituted participants randomly selected from primary schools in Serang City, Indonesia. Questionnaire and in-depth interviews were used to collect the data on three factors, namely the potential of reconstructing English curriculum learning sources, the opportunity of English learning, and students' perception toward learning English. This study found that primary school students had higher English learning familiarity since they had access to adequate English learning sources; they also responded very well to learning opportunities of the English courses; and revealed a positive perception about their English learning experience. These results indicate that the English language had the potential to be reconstructed in the latest curriculum of primary schools in Indonesia to optimize the young learners' potential for language acquisition. This study recognizes that the reposition of English teaching is essential to maximize students' potential. The study recommends highlighting students' points of view while reconstructing the curriculum. This study also answered the gap of students' perception towards English learning in order to complete user acceptance.

Contribution/Originality: This study is one of very few studies which have investigated the importance of teaching after the English reconstruction attempts made by the new Curriculum 2013 in elementary schools of Indonesia from students' point of view. It highlighted the aspects of learning source, learning opportunity, and perception toward English faced by students in order to reform English teaching position in Indonesia.

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a linguistically diverse country with more than seven hundred vernaculars along with their dialects spoken by geographically distributed ethnic groups. Although English is the language of communication, it cannot be freed from students' perception and point of view, which are much affected by their cultural backgrounds, values, customs, and beliefs. For several years, Indonesia has used a competency-based curriculum developed for each level of education institution (KTSP) before it decided to develop the new curriculum of 2013 based on Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) Decree No. 81A years 2013. The very next year in 2014, there was a revision of this curriculum but a few model elementary schools still continued operating the KTSP curriculum until

they were ready to implement as well as adopt the new curriculum along with its revision. The MoEC also provided five guidelines for the 2013 curriculum implementation. They were (1) preparation and curriculum management guidelines, (2) the local content guidelines, (3) extracurricular activities guidelines, (4) general teaching and learning guidelines, and (5) curriculum evaluation guidelines (Zein, 2017).

According to the new curriculum, the Ministry laid regulations that schools should teach three languages: one was the indigenous language (based on school location), second was the Indonesian (the national language), and third was English (as a foreign language). Owing to the less attention given to the English language, the time allocation for learning the English language at all levels of schools was also decreased. Learners were now not exposed to pleasant learning conditions as their opportunities to learn English had significantly reduced (Panggabean, 2015). These initiatives aimed at adopting pedagogical strategies in language teaching and help maximize the potential of the learners (Susanto, 2013) and at the same time preserve the indigenesness of their mother tongue. One of the arguments behind this curricular change was that too much exposure of students to a foreign language would potentially interfere with their character building and a potential deviation from the use of the mother tongue. To avoid this, the new curriculum of 2013 therefore kept English as a compulsory course or an additional subject along with the indigenous language to maintain the local content. In some programs, English remained only an extracurricular course combined with vocational courses of technology and scouting (Zein, 2017).

Although the new regulations checked the wide usage of the English language, English still played a vital role in social media and global communication. Besides, a particular group of young learners developed interest in this language and acquired this language from the elementary level itself. This young group took the benefit of the early start of acquiring a foreign language and as a result they were better exposed to this language as compared to other learners. They acquired better language skills than those who started acquiring this language as adult learners in their late life (Ibrahim, Bombieri, & Varenina, 2020). Being younger learners further helped them achieve higher proficiency than the older learners (Krashen, 1982). These changes are better understood by examining the students' developmental psychology behind a language learning program (Sari, Yusuf, Darniati, & Fajrina, 2020).

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

This reconstruction marks a paradigm shift in the need and perception of the learners but it fails to justify the curricular and pedagogical changes initiated by the Ministry of Education in the form of drastically replacing the existing curriculum with the New 2013 Curriculum. The repetitive revision and piloting of the new curriculum also resulted in implementation problems and did not make any significant impact upon learning outcomes (Susanto, 2013). This suggests that the success of English teaching in Indonesia much depends upon a freedom from the deeply embedded mindsets and cultural backgrounds of students. On the other hand, there has been much pressure on students due to the growing demand of communicative competence in the English language. Additionally, the advancement in science and technology increased the needs of communication in the English language. This also brought awareness among the Indonesian youth to be better prepared in English for building a good career.

There is also another challenge of looking at the availability of learning resources and facilities to determine successful curriculum implementation. The availability of learning resources facilitate the teacher as well as learners to exploit language input resources and maximize a purposeful output (Tomlinson, 2011). Many primary schools in Indonesia do not have sufficient and appropriate teaching and learning facilities to support teaching and learning of the English curriculum (Hawanti, 2014) and it is required to explore the existing learning materials to figure out the potential implementation of English learning (Cakir, 2015).

This study therefore intends to shed light on the issue of students' acceptance and the need to reconstruct the English curriculum in Elementary school in Indonesia accurately. Investigating this issue is essential for educators' authority to take active roles in replacing the English in the strategic position of the primary school in the coming years. Additionally, it can be asserted that there is not much research carried out in this domain that explored the

learners' point of view. This current study aims to evaluate the potential of reconstruction of English particularly in primary school curriculum by exploring the students' opinions in aspects of learning resources available, learning opportunity, and perception toward learning English. The study followed the premise that learners' need and acceptability have a direct effect on the success of programs in the future.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. *Position of English in the new curriculum*

The position of English after reducing it to an extracurricular subject has also been evaluated through the lenses of different stakeholders (Jazuly, Indrayani, & Prystiananta, 2019; Sepyanda, 2017; Zein., 2017). These studies unanimously accepted the growing need to fit the English language with the new social demand, to sense whether the reconstruction meets the intended purpose; to investigate the dynamic issues in the implementation of these changes and to evaluate its effectiveness. A few studies examined this reconstruction from teachers' points of view as well (Iyitloglu & Alci, 2015; Kocaman & Cansız, 2012).

The position of English in the New Curriculum 2013 is also not explicitly stated. The reason is that the English subject is feasible neither in the local content nor in extracurricular or vocational programs (Jazuly et al., 2019). English is introduced only to help learners acquire communicative competence in their social discourse. The learning of English is only confined to mastering the four language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking), which were essential elements for establishing social communication. Moreover, it also stresses the importance of turning students' learning into real-life practice and using language in an authentic communicative environment (Sunengsih & Fahrurrozi, 2015). It is contrary to the belief that the decreasing position of English in the curriculum and reducing it to extracurricular has diminished its communicative characteristics (Alwasilah, 2013). Though it is true that by limiting the English language learning hours, there are fewer opportunities to practice this language formally (Erarslan & Topkaya, 2019).

3.2. *English Teaching Principles*

When the New Curriculum 2013 reduced the position of English from a compulsory language to an extracurricular subject, mainly to bring the local content in teaching, it was necessary to reorient the teachers with the new requirements. A set of 12 basic principles were issued as guidelines for teachers and educational stakeholders classified in three categories: cognitive, affective and linguistic (Brown, 2001). The cognitive aspect included the principles of (1) automaticity (2) meaningful learning, (3) reward anticipation (4) intrinsic motivation and (5) strategic investment; the affective element included (6) language ego (7) self-confidence (8) risk-taking and (9) connection between language and culture; the linguistic principles consisted of (10) first language (11) cross-language and (12) communicative competence. These teaching principles were designed to fit the language curriculum within the developmental phase and help in reconstructing the language curriculum. Besides, these teaching principles would also give a deeper understanding of what should and should not be placed during the learning process (Ali, Hamid, & Moni, 2011).

Besides these teaching principles, Ministry of Education also kept in mind the need to teach English at primary school level. There were provisions of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in Elementary Schools in order to acquire competence in the Basic English language skills like speaking listening, reading and writing, so that students can communicate in English in schools and build a familiar social environment. It was felt that in primary schools, it is important to get an initial understanding of the country, people, and culture of some English-speaking countries. Moreover, the teaching of the English language will not only provide students with basic knowledge and a better understanding of this language but will also create a positive attitude towards this language. Besides, by studying the culture and language of other countries, the intellect, personality, and method of teaching students will also gradually develop (Zein, 2017).

3.3. Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL)

Contextually, it is important to argue that language competencies should be developed through age-appropriate teaching methods. In other words, English language education at early stages is believed to provide more benefits than studying it at an older age. Hence there exists the hypothesis of mastering the language through principles laid down in Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) (Copland & Garton, 2014). According to this theory (TEYL), the two years prior to the age of puberty (about 11-13 years) is considered a critical period during which it is possible to acquire language skills similar to what is practiced by native speakers (Butler, 2014). It is believed that English language learning during this period will facilitate the language acquisition process among young learners and will enable them to achieve high and even close to native language proficiency (Zein, 2017).

However, problems have been encountered in the implementation of TEYL in elementary schools in non-native countries such as limited class hours, inadequate textbooks, lack of learning resources, lack of learner motivation, and large classes (Uztosun, 2016). Having limited class hours directs teachers to only focus on completing the textbook. Teachers will often find difficulty to use different and variety of learning materials as well as activities (Garton, Copland, & Burns, 2011; Mantik & Choi, 2017). Other problems faced by non-English native countries include lack of student motivation and interest while applying TEYL in schools (Enever, 2014; Kralova & Kucerka, 2019). It is important to address to these problems that mostly require developing affective attributes at an early age. If adequately developed, these attributes formulate students' perceptions and prospective attitudes towards language learning. It is also important to promote children's affective attributes because negative perception created in the initial stages of English learning could reduce children's motivation and interest to learn English in future years (Nguyen, 2018). Hence TEYL needs a specific approach related to develop learners' characteristics.

Brown (1994) suggests five categories of learning development among Young language learners: First, the intellectual development of young learners should be concrete, i.e., the teachers should engage in real and straightforward teaching methods rather than abstract and complicated explanations. Second, teachers should provide improvisation to accommodate students' short attention span. This will help them to retain what they learn. Third, teachers need to create an exciting teaching and learning environment to maximize the level of students' sensory input. Fourth, the affective development of students should be supported by an environment conducive to their emotional problems. Finally, teachers should improve the learners' acquisition by authentic language material.

In order to give a better understanding of the issue, Zulkifly (2014) specified a few characteristics of young learners. According to him, young learners are active learners as they constantly discover new knowledge and experience by exploring physical, social, and ideological content in the environment. They need a language as a communication system to understand this new knowledge in its context. Young learners possess basic knowledge about simple names, signs, foods, etc. before starting the school but they tend to learn new things holistically through a curriculum. They also perceive meaningful learning with their imagination where they simulate themselves for different roles and needs in their future career. It is important that these characteristics are kept in mind while designing young learners learning activities in order to achieve learning success.

3.4. The rationale for English Reconstruction

The application of reconstructing English in primary schools is based on several theories supporting early age foreign language learning. There are a few fundamental assumptions to rationalize the reconstruction of the English learning and its position in primary schools including (1) Language Acquisition Device (LAD), (2) Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) and (3) affective theories.

Chomsky (1965) postulated that every individual has a Language Acquisition Device (LAD) that helps them to learn a language. This LAD acts as a language learning device since their birth and gets activated gradually in a learning environment. The LAD theory also states that the process of foreign language learning is the same as it is

used in first language (L1) learning. The LAD makes use of these L1 inputs taken from a child's social interaction with parents, friends, and others. These act as primary tools to optimize the LAD. Based on this theory, it is much easier to practice English language learning since young learners had already activated their learning device at early level.

Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) theory is the subject of a long-standing debate in linguistics, according to which language acquisition is biologically linked to the learners' age (Lenneberg, 1969). According to this theory, there is a biological timetable for foreign language acquisition, which can be done more optimally between three to six years of age. Children learn a foreign language in the same method as they learn their first language (Cahyati & Madya, 2019). Some researchers highlight that the development of language learning is in line with the learners' biological development. Hence learner with high brain plasticity have a greater potential to learn a foreign language (Gürsoy, 2011). Others believe that language development tends coagulated in puberty along with brain inflexibility, i.e., children should begin to learn second language learning before their puberty (Zhetpisbayeva, Shelestova, & Abildina, 2016).

The affective theory refers to both oral and written inputs for the language learning process. It believes that in order to process the information, the brain responds to the affective condition. If there are excellent conditions such as being brave, confident, and happy, the language input will be well accepted and more organized (Babayigit, 2019). Hence, by exploring the young learners' perception, it is easy to determine their potential for the acceptability of English at early levels (Jin et al., 2014). Teachers of English in elementary schools should take this factor into consideration.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative research design to investigate the English teaching reconstruction at Indonesian elementary schools from students' point of view.

4.2. Participants

The sample of this study comprised 50 students from an elementary school in Serang, Indonesia. The participants were selected through random sampling method to represent the Indonesian primary school students. The participants belonged to grade four to grade six levels. The reason for selecting a higher level is because they have English class experience from fourth until sixth grade.

4.3. Data Collection Techniques

Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used to obtain data about students' English learning experience. The benefit of using two different data collection methods enabled the researcher to triangulate its findings and to ensure validity and reliability of the instruments. The data collection was based on three major learning aspects: availability of English language learning resources, English language learning opportunity, and perception toward learning the English language.

4.4. Data Collection Procedures

The procedure of data collection involved two steps: Step one involved administration of the questionnaire through a survey. After gathering the data and its analysis, the second step was conducting the interview with the participants to triangulate the findings of the questionnaire.

4.5. Instruments

The questionnaire used in this study consisted of 39 questions. The respondents were required to give their responses on a 5-point Likert scale to statements in the range from 'Never' to 'Very Frequently.' Besides, there were also five semi-structured questions in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into three parts: the first part dealt with questions about English learning resources outside the school, modified from common instructional materials used by Cakir (2015); the second part consisted of questions related to English learning opportunities, based on past studies literature and experts' opinions (Copland & Garton, 2014; Erarslan & Topkaya, 2019); the third part measured students' perceptions of the English learning in a classroom, modified from studies related to teachers' point of view (Ibrahim et al., 2020; Iyitloglu & Alci, 2015; Jin et al., 2014).

4.6. Data Analysis Techniques

The data collected was quantitatively analyzed using percentages and means for the sake of descriptive analysis and content analysis. The objective was to determine the current students' potential of English language learning. The data collected from the interview was utilized to support and triangulate the findings of the questionnaire. The in-depth descriptive analysis of the interview data supported several findings of the questionnaire.

5. RESULTS

The results were classified according to the variables of the study namely: English learning source availability; English learning opportunity, and Students' perceptions toward English learning.

5.1. English Learning Sources Availability

English TV programs, YouTube videos, English songs, social media posts, and online game instructions are considered to be familiar learning sources outside the school. These media sources are the most common platforms available to the students of English. The researcher selected these as data collection nodes and framed questionnaire based on the indicators as revealed in Table 1.

Table-1. Students' responses to English learning sources.

Indicators	Questionnaire items	Average score
- English learning sources - TV program - YouTube video - English songs - Social media post - Online game instructions	1. Watching English TV program	3.76
	2. Understanding the English TV program	3.52
	3. Watching English TV duration	3.76
	4. Watching English YouTube video	3.62
	5. Watching English YouTube video duration	3.74
	6. Listening to English songs	3.78
	7. Listening to English songs duration	3.92
	8. Singing English songs	4.38
	9. Finding English social media post	3.92
	10. Understanding English social media post	3.48
	11. Finding English social media post duration	3.62
	12. Finding English online game instruction	3.98
	13. Understanding the English online game instruction	3.8
	14. English online game instruction duration	3.74
Mean		3.784

Table1 exhibits that most students had a frequent access to the English learning resources out of school. This suggests that they were quite familiar with and understood clearly the English language through TV programs,

YouTube videos, English songs, social media posts, and online game instructions. The results of the first section of the questionnaire are illustrated in Figure 1:

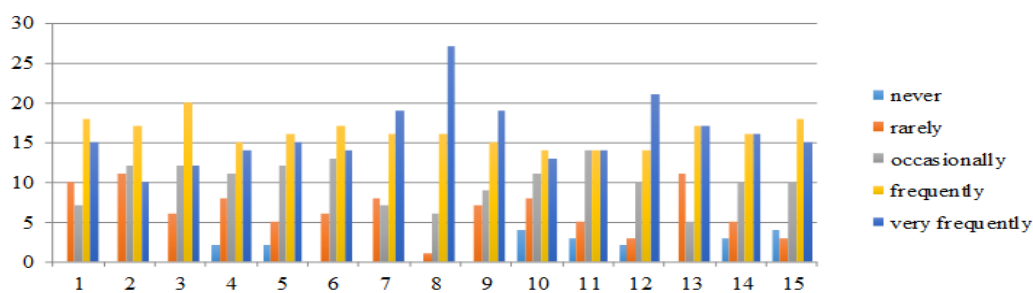


Figure-1. Students' English learning sources.

It is evident from Figure 1 that students have a high and varied English learning source availability. These responses show a level of 3.784, which indicates that students easily familiarize with English through TV programs, YouTube videos, English songs, social media posts, and online game instructions frequently. This suggests that the respondents frequently watch, understand, and familiarize themselves with these resources. The frequency and duration given to TV programs and YouTube videos show the amount of interest taken by respondents and that they have enough time to access these sources. English songs were found to be the most frequently watched English content by respondents while game online instructions in English were the least watched but whenever they watched it, they understood the instruction.

5.2. English Learning Opportunity

In the second part of the questionnaire, English learning opportunities available to students were measured and compared in three different learning settings: at home, at school, and during learning the English courses. Table 2 classifies data obtained from the respondents in the three settings:

Table-2. Students' English learning opportunity.

Indicators	Points of questionnaires	Average score
English learning opportunity • at home	1. English speaking practice at home	2.54
	2. English speaking practice duration at home	2.78
	3. English listening practice at home	2.7
	4. English listening practice duration at home	2.96
	5. English writing practice at home	1.88
	6. English writing practice duration at home	2.02
	7. English reading practice at home	2.1
	8. English reading practice duration at home	2.36
• in school	9. English speaking practice in school	3.32
	10. English speaking practice duration in school	3.84
	11. English listening practice in school	2.88
	12. English listening duration practice in school	2.8
	13. English writing practice in school	3.56
	14. English writing practice duration in school	3.9
	15. English reading practice in school	3.18
	16. English reading practice duration in school	3.66
• In English course	17. English speaking practice in English course	2.66
	18. English speaking practice duration in English course	2.68
	19. English listening practice in English course	2.3
	20. English listening practice duration in English course	2.36
	21. English writing practice in English course	2.4
	22. English writing practice duration in English course	2.46
	23. English reading practice in English course	2.58
	24. English reading practice duration in English course	2.62

It is evident from Table 2 that the highest percentage of English learning opportunities available to students is in the school setting. National Elementary School of Serang, Indonesia, where the study was conducted and where the sampled belonged to, thus still implements English as a core subject at elementary level. At the higher levels, the school however did not make learning of English mandatory in the curriculum since the school administration did not want to violate the norms of 2013 curriculum. Still, the findings reveal that English learning opportunity in school setting is high as compared to others. This suggests that students got used to English at very early age.

Individually, each of these settings has some characteristic to reveal. Figure 2, for instance, shows that respondents have inadequate learning opportunities at home. The average score for the learning opportunity of students in four language skills at home is measured as 2.41, which is categorized as moderate and a clear indication that students did not find frequently adequate resources to learn at home. Among the four skills, the data reveals that English speaking and listening opportunities for students at home were only confined to communicating with parents or listening to English songs at home.

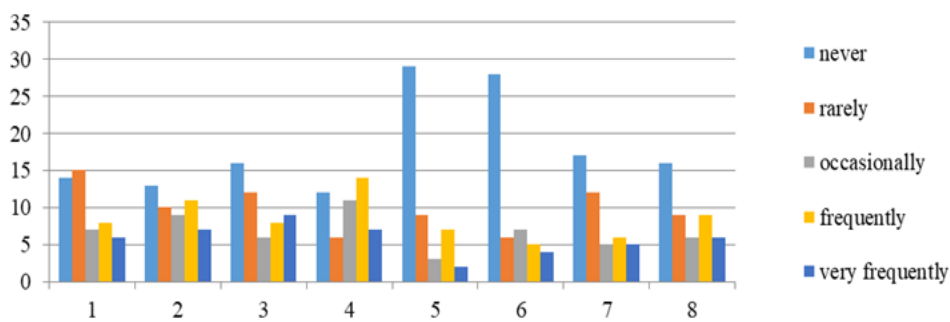


Figure-2. Students' learning opportunities at home.

English reading opportunity is also seen as moderate even though students have access to the reading material. However, the chance of English writing was rarely found at home. To sum up, the results reveal that respondents do sometimes have time and opportunity to learn English but it is insufficient. This could be because they spent most of their learning time in school as was revealed in the moderate frequency in the duration of learning at home.

Figure 3 presents the findings of learning opportunities in school. The average score of 3.39 suggest a high level learning opportunity in four language skills in school. This suggests that they could find adequate learning media in school.

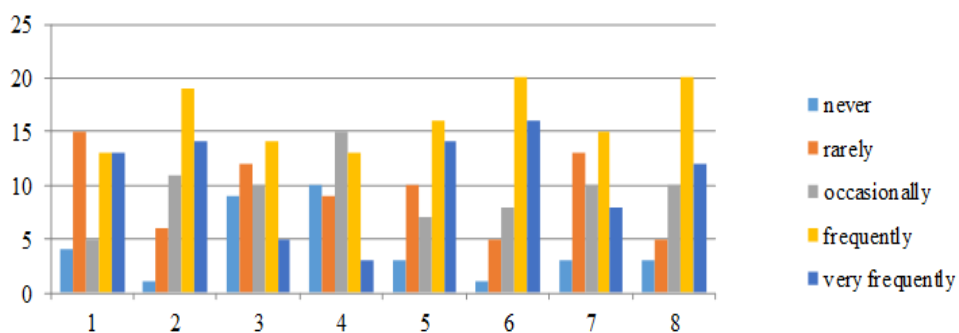


Figure-3. Students' learning opportunities in school.

The findings also suggest that respondents have more time and opportunity to learn English speaking, listening, reading and writing in school as compared to at home. This could be because they spent most of their learning time in school rather than at home. The high frequency and longer duration of learning English also suggests respondents' interest in learning English skills. Among the four language skills, listening was found to be having a lack of opportunity and least duration. It may be because of respondents' less preference of listening activity and the inadequate availability of listening material in the language laboratory.

Figure 4 reveals that respondents of this study enjoyed sufficient learning opportunities in an English course. However, not all of the respondents joined the additional English classes for several reasons. The average score of 2.50 suggest a moderate level of the learning opportunity of students in four language skills at an additional English course.

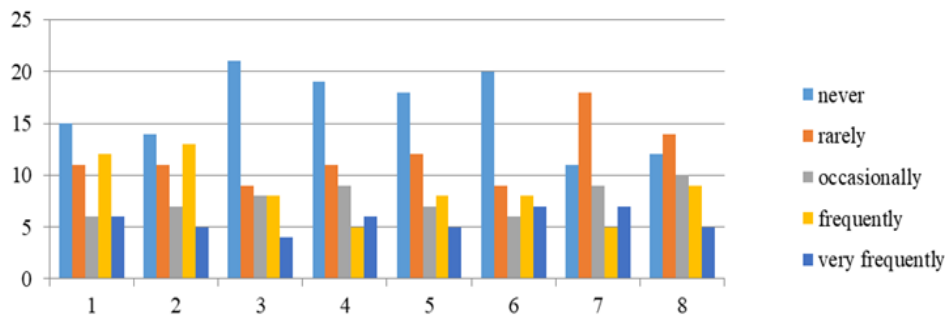


Figure-4. Students' learning opportunities in English course.

The respondents of this study also attended other classes and therefore the classes in English speaking, listening, reading and writing were not much addressed to. This low frequency and less duration of learning the additional English courses reveal a lack of interest in learning English. In short, the findings conclude that respondents have little time and opportunity to learn English in the course. Therefore, learning English through an English course appears at third place after learning English in school and at home. The fact that students spend their learning time mostly at school and home affected this result.

Comparing the three figures above, it is revealed that students get English learning opportunities mostly in school rather than at home and in English courses. This phenomenon is a result of the high awareness and demands that the schools provide to learn English. It also suggests that schools are the preferred place to language learning and competency building and therefore they should study it as a compulsory subject in the school. On the other hand, the limited English learning opportunity at home and in English courses could be complementary.

5.3. Students' Perception of English Learning

The third step of this research was to examine students' attitude and perception toward English learning. For this purpose, a semi structured-interview was carried out. The interview questions aimed at finding information about students' English learning frequency, feelings, motivation, learning challenges, and difficulties that built their learning perception. The data aggregated from students' responses showed that their English learning perceptions were high. Mostly, they perceived learning English as enjoyable and faced no significant difficulties in learning English at the elementary education level.

The first question of this interview was "When was the time last that you learned English?" This question aimed at assessing the frequency of the students' learning English. Although the rate of learning English had fallen down enough since the implementation of the 2013 curriculum, all the respondents stated that they learned English mostly in schools where they spent almost 45 minutes intensively in a week to learn English. They informed that the last time they learned English was a week ago. However, it was understood that they were familiar with English even though got minimal learning time.

The second question of the interview was "How do you feel about learning English?" This question aimed at assessing students' feelings or perception about learning English. The reason for asking this question was that attitude and perception for a subject directly affect learning motivation and academic performance. Most of the respondents (84%) agreed that English lessons in their school were quite engaging. There accepted that English teaching was fun and of great interest. Some expressions of interest included *I like English* and *English is interesting for me*. However, what seemed exciting to some respondents turned out to be uninteresting to others. There were

also statements showing tedious feelings such as *English is difficult*, though these were in a limited number. Many of them also found it interesting because they learned many foreign language terms. Foreign language learning is always interesting for young learners since they are able to relate them to the structure of their native language.

The third question was “*Why do you learn English?*” This question aimed at assessing students' reasons for learning English. The respondents were expected to share their awareness of the importance of learning English and also the necessity of learning English from their point of view. It was premised in this study that awareness and need to learn English guide the authorities to develop curriculum, learning material as well as teaching practices. Students shared a few reasons for learning English such as it was beneficial and essential; it helped them to speak English in global discourses. There were expressions such as “*I study it because I want to be able to speak English*”, and “*.because English is an important subject.*”. Noticeably, it was evident from these expressions that students intended to learn English willingly, i.e., they were self-motivated. Some students also expressed that they learned English only because it was a compulsory subject for their level.

The fourth question was “*Would you like to improve your English skill?*” This question aimed at judging the motivation of children while learning English, since the desire to enhance the ability arises only among those who are interested in the subject. All respondents agreed to improve their English learning skills. This supported the findings of the questionnaire which also revealed the importance given to learning English. Even though a few respondents felt that English was interesting, they always found the reasons to learn this language. When the researcher questioned them about the skills that they wanted to improve, a few respondents expressed: *I like speaking English* and *I like English songs*, and so on. This indicates that students preferred and took more interest in speaking and listening as compared to other skills like reading and writing. This also supports the earlier findings obtained from the questionnaire data.

The last question was “*Why is learning English difficult?*” Students were asked to express their subjective position about the notion whether English is difficult or not and the reason. The responses received adequately revealed the students' perception. The findings are illustrated in [Figure 5](#).

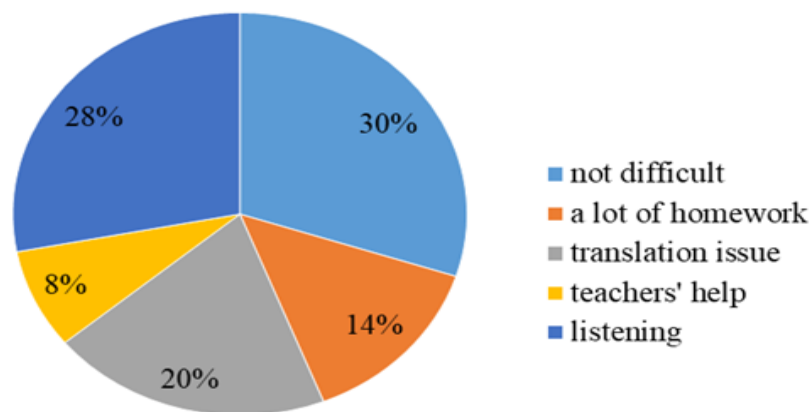


Figure-5. Students' difficulty reasons percentage.

Most of the students (30%) believed that the English lesson was not painful to be followed. This was consistent with the previous section where students showed interest in learning English. Even though all the respondents were eager and showed the motivation to learn English, there were still a total of 70% respondents who experienced some or other reasons for difficulty. For instance, listening skill was perceived as the most difficult skill to be mastered; this made learning English problematic for a few learners. The reason was that listening skill was assumed to be infrequent during their learning experience. Teachers also did not optimize time and resources to provide opportunities of listening skills nor made any efforts to improve the learning material and teaching methods. A few students (20%) felt it difficult to follow the translation methods used by teachers as revealed in expressions such as “*I don't understand the meaning*” and “*Too many foreign terms*”. A small number of 14% of

respondents also thought that they were given a lot of homework in English lessons. Getting homework was considered a difficulty because of limited learning hours and excess of learning content or material. The rest of the reasons included lack of teachers' help (8%) as seen in expressions such as “*Teachers are not helpful*”, “*Teachers are often angry*”, and “*Teachers left us in the class learning independently*”. This suggests that teachers' help in English learning should be taken into consideration to reduce students' difficulty in English learning. A good support of humorous teachers and their help could solve many of the undefined problems during learning.

6. DISCUSSION

Ever since the introduction of New 2013 Curriculum, Indonesian education system has experienced a paradigm shift in English learning, particularly in elementary schools. In such a scenario, several studies have been carried out to evaluate the implementation of the new curriculum. The current study was also in this series which attempted to examine the introduction of the new curriculum for a particular age group of learners, namely those who are at the elementary level in primary schools. According to this researcher, this is the right age to examine students' experiences about teaching and learning, and to judge the impact of teaching practices that are appropriate at this level (Nguyen, 2018).

Several interpretations can be made based on the findings encountered during the current research. The data gathered from both survey and interviews indicated that students were much attracted to learning English. There was a general consensus among the respondents that the English learning in the introductory classes should be simple for the cognitive and language development of children and to familiarize students with English. The study had taken a few premises that young learners showed interest in English sources provided there is a good frequency and adequate duration of their interaction with English language learning. Since the new Curriculum 2013 had reduced the contact hours of learning English in elementary schools, the participants had limited learning hours to learn this language. When the learning duration and frequency was limited in schools, the students found sources outside school, which included English TV program, YouTube videos, English songs, and social media. These sources familiarized students with English learning because they had enough time to access these sources. Out of these sources, English songs provided the most frequent English content to students. This also suggests that child-friendly learning practices exist in real-world situations and learning should go beyond the classroom.

However, regarding the opportunity of learning English from various sources, school was still perceived to be the most preferred choice of most respondents, more than learning this language at home and through English courses. In order to make this a widespread preference, the participants opined that classroom situations need to be modeled to allow students to apply what they learn at school in order to achieve their future communicative and social goals. This also indicates that the opportunity of learning comprehensive language skills at school needs to be the main factor of curriculum reconstruction which was perhaps ignored in the making of the 2013 curriculum (Kaya, 2019).

The results of this study also revealed a positive perception about the components under investigation. This is considered as a promising sign regarding the output of a learning program. It suggests that the curriculum should always respond to the potential difficulties faced by students in classrooms. A majority of participants showed a positive attitude towards English learning and they believed that they would learn new knowledge and develop language skills in their classrooms. They also agreed that learning English at primary level in elementary schools builds a positive attitude and higher motivation toward this language, which will potentially build a strong Indonesian workforce of the future. It was also urged that while designing the curricula for elementary schools, it should be noted that younger students differ from adults in several aspects, particularly in their level of development and literacy. Even for the content development of English curriculum, the teachers should pay attention to the fact that younger students depend more on oral speech, i.e., more material of the second language

should be provided for speaking and listening skills in simple and understandable manner (Erarslan & Topkaya, 2019). If adhered to these suggestions, it will be much easier to meet the students' needs through the curriculum.

Last, but not the least, this study found out that Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) requires age-appropriate teaching strategies in order to develop essential competencies (Copland & Garton, 2014). To keep students' motivation high, good teaching strategies play a major role in achieving learning results and meeting adequate learning goals. If the motivation is kept high with appropriate teaching strategies, having limited class hours seems to have no impact on learning English (Garton et al., 2011) and it will be easier to successfully implement the TEYL program (Enever, 2014).

7. RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

In the Indonesian context, it is recommended to manage English learning in at least three ways: First, English should be placed as local content in schools, synergizing it with the indigenous language learning, i.e. the local vernacular or the Indonesian language. Secondly, those schools that have inadequate resources, English should be kept as an extracurricular language and as an optional course providing access to those who want to opt for this course. Thirdly, it is strongly recommended that English should be offered as a compulsory subject in primary school with suitable learning opportunity. One of the other recommendations of this study is to optimize English learning by integrating out of the school resources like YouTube videos, and social media platforms as everyday routine activity. The use of these sources improves the accessibility of learning sources outside school.

There were a few limitations of this study which restricted its scope and analysis. First, the sample size was very small owing to the time constraints. Hence, the results would indicate a wider range and more varied factors if this study was carried out at a larger scale with a bigger sample. Moreover, this study was conducted in only one city of Indonesia. It is important to conduct surveys in other cities, towns, and regions across Indonesia so that the impact of the reconstruction of the English curriculum could be analyzed in various other contexts. The data collection methods were also found to be inadequate and in future studies such methods like classroom observation, focus group interviews with stakeholders such as teachers and families can be used. Finally, it was felt that the opinion expressed by respondents were very subjective due to their limited cognitive characteristics. Further research can be conducted in this area to bring more objectivity in the study.

8. CONCLUSION

To sum up, this study set out to examine the English teaching reconstruction at Indonesian elementary schools from students' point of view. The study attempted to understand how students perceived English learning according to the new curriculum, and the changes that were seen in accessibility, duration, familiarity, availability, and opportunity to learn the English language. Overall, the findings revealed that students had positive opinion regarding all these aspects. The differences found in acceptability and affordability may be only because of different implementation strategies adopted by schools and teachers.

On the whole, the idea of reconstruction received a positive response from the respondents towards English learning. It is however required to synthesize the reconstruction efforts at the curriculum level with the English learning potential in elementary schools in Indonesia. This will determine the extent to which the English learning or its curricular contents needs to be reconstructed. One good thing is that students get familiar with English not only in the school but also in their homes. They have the access to English learning because there are sources outside school like YouTube and other social media. In this scenario, English learning will not be burdensome to students as most of them would not find it difficult to learn English.

Such accessibility of learning opportunities outside the school also improves the potential of learning among the young learners. This helps the Young Learners to achieve success in their future career through acquiring the language competence. Such a high motivation and excitement for learning English should be taken into

consideration to improve even teachers' competencies. If the teachers are professionally trained and motivated, students face fewer learning difficulties.

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