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Unprepared but Required: Voices of Primary School Teachers on Their English Teaching Readiness

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ABSTRACT

The introduction of compulsory English in Indonesian primary schools from 2027 has intensified the need to understand teachers' readiness, particularly among non-specialist English teachers. This study explored primary school teachers' readiness to teach English through the Alignment–Capability–Engagement (ACE) framework. A basic qualitative research design was employed involving 33 primary school teachers in South Kalimantan participating in the Peningkatan Kompetensi Guru Sekolah Dasar Mengajar Bahasa Inggris (PKGSD-MBI) program. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, and data were collected through open-ended questionnaires and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed six interconnected themes across the three ACE dimensions. Teachers demonstrated alignment through their understanding of the educational goals of English instruction and perceived institutional support, although formal school implementation remained limited. Capability was reflected in teachers' continuous self-directed learning, pedagogical planning, and the integration of classroom English and diverse instructional resources. Engagement was characterized by strong motivation to teach English despite limited opportunities to participate in broader school-based English initiatives. The findings suggest that teacher readiness is a multidimensional construct shaped by organizational support, developing professional capability, and sustained commitment. The study highlights the value of the ACE framework in understanding teacher readiness and underscores the importance of structured professional development and school-level support to facilitate the successful implementation of compulsory English in Indonesian primary schools.

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1. INTRODUCTION

English has become increasingly important in primary education as globalization, economic development, and technological advancement continue to influence educational priorities worldwide (Copland et al., 2024). In Indonesia, the growing demand for English proficiency has encouraged schools to introduce English learning at

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earlier educational stages. However, unlike in many other countries, English is not a compulsory subject in Indonesian primary education and is offered only as an optional subject at the discretion of individual schools (Zein, 2017; Meisani et al., 2020). Despite its non-compulsory status, the increasing recognition of English as an important life skill has led many primary schools to continue providing English instruction. Consequently, primary school teachers are expected to support English learning. This expectation has become even more relevant as discussions on strengthening English instruction in Indonesian primary schools continue to gain momentum, particularly following the government's decision to introduce English as a compulsory subject at the primary level from 2027 onward (Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah Republik Indonesia, 2025).

Despite these increasing expectations, teacher readiness remains a major concern. Unlike many countries where English is taught by specialist teachers, English instruction in Indonesian primary schools is often entrusted to classroom teachers who may not possess formal qualifications in English language teaching (Widagsa et al., 2025). As a result, teachers frequently face the challenge of teaching a subject for which they feel inadequately prepared. Previous studies have shown that many primary school teachers are not fully ready to teach English due to limited pedagogical training (Matsumura & Hinoki, 2025), inadequate access to teaching resources, student heterogeneity, and excessive workloads (Bulan et al., 2025). Furthermore, although some teachers perceive themselves as psychologically ready to teach English (Angraeni & Yusuf, 2022), some others continue to struggle with low confidence due to insufficient training opportunities (Mutiah et al., 2020). Similar findings were reported by Padmadewi et al. (2020), who found that teachers had yet to demonstrate optimal readiness in their English teaching practices. These findings suggest that teacher readiness is a complex issue that extends beyond teachers' self-perceptions. Rather, readiness to teach English encompasses not only linguistic competence but also pedagogical knowledge, confidence, and access to appropriate teaching resources (Handayani et al., 2026).

Notwithstanding the growing body of research on English teaching readiness, important gaps remain in the literature. The abovementioned existing studies have primarily examined teachers' readiness in relation to English instruction in general. However, limited attention has been given to teacher readiness in the context of the forthcoming implementation of compulsory English instruction in Indonesian primary schools beginning in 2027. As this policy is expected to increase the demand for English teaching across primary schools, understanding teachers' readiness to respond to these changes has become increasingly important.

Furthermore, although teacher readiness has been investigated from various perspectives, few studies have employed the Alignment–Capability–Engagement (ACE) framework (Schiemann, 2012) to examine how teachers perceive their readiness for English teaching. The ACE framework offers a comprehensive lens by conceptualizing readiness as the interaction between alignment with institutional expectations, capability to perform required tasks, and engagement in professional responsibilities. Applying this framework may provide deeper insights into the opportunities and challenges faced by teachers as they prepare for the implementation of compulsory English instruction. Therefore, this study explores primary school teachers' readiness to teach English through the ACE framework, with particular attention to the implications of the 2027 policy reform.

The study focuses on primary school teachers participating in the PKGSD-MBI English training program in South Kalimantan. These teachers attended professional development activities designed to strengthen both English proficiency and English teaching skills. Through an analysis of open-ended questionnaire responses, this study explores how teachers perceive their readiness to teach English and identifies the alignment, capability, and engagement factors that shape their experiences. In doing so, the study contributes to the growing body of literature on teacher readiness by foregrounding teachers' voices and providing a nuanced understanding of what it means to be unprepared but required in the context of primary English education.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews theoretical and empirical literature underpinning the present study. It first discusses the concept of teacher readiness in the context of primary English language teaching, drawing on previous research to illustrate the multidimensional nature of readiness. It then introduces the ACE framework as the theoretical lens for examining teachers' readiness to respond to educational change. Finally, it presents the PKGSD-MBI program as the context of the study, highlighting its role in preparing primary school teachers for the forthcoming implementation of compulsory English instruction in Indonesia.

2.1. Teacher Readiness

Teacher readiness can be understood as a state in which conditions within an educational setting enable school staff to engage effectively with change. Lynch and Smith (2016) define readiness as the extent to which organizational conditions prepare individuals to respond to and participate in change processes. In this view, readiness is not limited to individual competence but is shaped by the alignment between individuals and organizational goals, the availability of appropriate capabilities, and the level of engagement in the change process.

In the context of English language teaching in primary schools, previous studies have similarly shown that teacher readiness is a multidimensional issue that extends beyond organizational conditions to include individual and instructional challenges. Research on primary school English teachers consistently indicates that teacher readiness is influenced by multiple interrelated factors. Many teachers are reported to be unprepared to teach English due to limited pedagogical training, inadequate access to teaching resources, diverse student abilities, and heavy workloads (Matsumura & Hinoki, 2025; Handayani et al., 2026; Bulan et al., 2025). Although some teachers perceive themselves as ready to teach English (Angraeni & Yusuf, 2022), this perceived readiness does not necessarily translate into effective classroom practice, as low confidence due to insufficient training opportunities remain persistent challenges (Mutiah et al., 2020; Padmadewi et al., 2020). Viewed through the lens of Lynch and Smith's (2016) framework, these challenges can be interpreted as misalignments between expectations, limited capability development, and varying levels of teacher engagement in implementing English instruction in primary schools.

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2.2. The ACE Model

The Alignment–Capability–Engagement (ACE) framework provides a comprehensive perspective for understanding readiness as more than an individual attribute. Originally developed by Schiemann (2012) and subsequently applied to educational settings by Lynch and Smith (2016) and Madden (2017), the framework conceptualizes readiness as the interaction of three interdependent dimensions: alignment, capability, and engagement. Rather than viewing readiness solely in terms of competence, the ACE framework recognizes that individuals are more likely to implement change successfully when they understand and support organizational goals, possess the necessary capabilities, and remain committed to achieving shared objectives.

Alignment refers to the extent to which individuals share and support their school's goals, strategic priorities, values, and expectations, while understanding the processes required to achieve them (Schiemann, 2012; Madden, 2017; Lynch et al., 2017). In the context of English language teaching, alignment may be reflected in teachers' understanding of the rationale for introducing compulsory English, their acceptance of the policy, and their perceptions of whether teaching English aligns with their professional responsibilities as primary school teachers.

Capability concerns the knowledge, skills, resources, and processes that enable individuals to perform their responsibilities effectively (Schiemann, 2012; Madden, 2017; Lynch et al., 2017). Although capability includes individual competencies, it also encompasses organizational resources such as access to training, instructional materials, and appropriate technologies. This conceptualization of capability is consistent with previous studies on English teaching readiness, which highlight professional development opportunities, teaching resources (Mutiah et al., 2020; Bulan et al., 2025), and the English language proficiency required for classroom instruction (Handayani et al., 2026) as key factors influencing teachers' preparedness. Therefore, within this study, capability is understood as teachers' perceived capacity to teach English, supported by both their personal competencies and the institutional resources available to them.

Engagement represents teachers' commitment, satisfaction, motivation, and willingness to contribute to organizational goals beyond minimum job requirements (Schiemann, 2012; Madden, 2017; Lynch et al., 2017). In the context of compulsory English instruction, engagement may be reflected in teachers' enthusiasm for learning English, their willingness to participate in professional development, and their commitment to improving their instructional practices despite existing challenges. This dimension complements alignment and capability by recognizing that readiness depends not only on what teachers know and can do, but also on their willingness to act upon those competencies in response to educational change.

2.3. Context of the Study: The PKGSD-MBI Program

The forthcoming implementation of compulsory English instruction in Indonesian primary schools beginning in the 2027/2028 academic year (Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah Republik Indonesia, 2025) has created an urgent need to strengthen teachers' readiness to teach English. Recognizing that many primary school teachers assigned to teach English do not have formal qualifications in English language education, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education launched the *Peningkatan*

Kompetensi Guru SD Mengajar Bahasa Inggris (PKGSD-MBI) program as a national professional development initiative. The program is designed to support the implementation of the new policy by enhancing both teachers' English language proficiency and their pedagogical competence for teaching English at the primary level.

In the PKGSD-MBI program, each school nominated one classroom teacher from Grades 3 to 6, most of whom had already been assigned to teach English despite having no formal background in English language education. The program combines language development aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) at the A1 and A2 levels with pedagogical preparation for teaching English to young learners. Training materials are delivered through a national Learning Management System (LMS) and integrate STEM-oriented deep learning approaches, character education, and classroom English. Rather than preparing teachers solely to improve their English proficiency, the program seeks to equip them with the linguistic and pedagogical competencies required to implement communicative and contextually appropriate English instruction in primary classrooms.

From a research perspective, PKGSD-MBI provides a meaningful context for examining teacher readiness. The participants are classroom teachers who are expected to assume responsibility for teaching English despite having no formal educational background in English language teaching. As they are undergoing structured professional preparation for the forthcoming policy implementation, their experiences offer valuable insights into how teachers perceive their readiness while negotiating new professional expectations. Consequently, the program constitutes an appropriate context for exploring teacher readiness through the Alignment–Capability–Engagement (ACE) framework, as it brings together institutional expectations, capability development through professional learning, and teachers' engagement with educational change.

3. METHODS

This study adopted a basic qualitative research design (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) to explore how primary school teachers perceived their readiness to teach English. A basic qualitative approach is appropriate for understanding how individuals interpret and make meaning of their experiences. Rather than measuring teachers' readiness or evaluating the PKGSD-MBI program, this study explored teachers' perceptions of their readiness through the lens of the ACE framework.

The participants were 33 primary school classroom teachers from Banjarbaru, South Kalimantan, who participated in the PKGSD-MBI program. Using purposive sampling, the study selected teachers without formal qualifications in English language education who had completed the A1 and A2 training, including online learning through the Learning Management System (LMS), face-to-face workshops, microteaching, and classroom implementation. Data were collected through an open-ended questionnaire administered upon completion of the training. To facilitate data analysis, participants were assigned anonymized codes ranging from P1 to P33.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach: familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. The resulting themes were interpreted through the ACE framework to understand the factors shaping teachers' readiness to teach English.

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ChatGPT (OpenAI) and Gemini AI were used solely to assist in refining academic language and improving manuscript structure. These AI tools were not used for research design, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of results, or the formulation of scientific conclusions. All scientific content, research findings, and the final version of the manuscript were independently reviewed, verified, and approved by the authors, who bear full responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the published work.

4. RESULTS

This study explored primary school teachers' readiness to teach English in light of Indonesia's forthcoming compulsory English policy using the ACE framework. The following elaboration interprets each theme in relation to the framework to provide a more comprehensive understanding of teacher readiness for compulsory English implementation.

4.1 Teachers demonstrate alignment with the educational goals of English instruction

The findings indicate that most participants demonstrated a shared understanding of the purpose of English instruction in primary schools. Rather than viewing English merely as a curricular requirement, teachers perceived it as an essential means of preparing students for future communication, global participation, and lifelong learning. Their responses consistently emphasized equipping students with English communication skills from an early age, enabling them to adapt to technological and societal changes, and enhancing their future educational and career opportunities. For example, P23 explained the purpose of English instruction, *"Tujuan sekolah dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris adalah membekali siswa kemampuan komunikasi, akses informasi global, pengembangan literasi, serta persiapan pendidikan dan dunia kerja di era sekarang."* Similarly, P29 stated, *"Tujuan sekolah dalam penyelenggaraan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris adalah agar siswa mampu menggunakan bahasa Inggris untuk berkomunikasi dalam kehidupan sehari-hari, baik secara lisan maupun tulisan."* Other participants associated the introduction of English with the need to prepare learners for an increasingly globalized world. As P15 noted, *"Anak-anak bisa mengimbangi zaman yang mana sekarang bahasa Inggris sangat dipakai untuk masa depan mereka."* Although a few participants admitted having limited understanding of the school's objectives (e.g., *"Saya belum tau banyak tentang tujuannya"* [P3]), such responses were relatively uncommon. Overall, the findings suggest that teachers generally shared a common understanding of the broader educational purposes of English instruction.

This understanding was further reflected in the ways teachers described their classroom practices. Many participants reported attempting to align instruction with these goals by implementing communicative and student-centered learning activities. They emphasized the use of simple conversations, authentic contexts, games, dialogues, and balanced language-skill development. For instance, P28 explained, *"Saya memastikan praktik pembelajaran di kelas sejalan dengan tujuan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris dengan cara merancang pembelajaran yang berpusat pada siswa, komunikatif, dan sesuai dengan karakteristik anak SD."* Likewise, P29 described, *"Saya memastikan praktik pembelajaran di kelas sejalan dengan tujuan tersebut dengan menggunakan*

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kegiatan yang melatih siswa untuk aktif berkomunikasi dalam bahasa Inggris, seperti tanya jawab, permainan, dialog, dan kerja kelompok." Some teachers also emphasized the importance of exposing students to English through everyday classroom interaction. As P15 stated, *"Dengan cara melakukan daily conversation bahasa Inggris sederhana dengan anak-anak."* Nevertheless, not all teachers expressed the same level of confidence in translating these goals into classroom practice. One participant acknowledged, *"Karena pada dasarnya saya pribadi bukan merupakan lulusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, tentunya saya berupaya semampu yang saya bisa untuk dapat mengajarkan bahasa Inggris walaupun hanya dengan cara yang sederhana"* (P12).

Viewed through the ACE framework, these findings suggest a relatively strong level of alignment. Most teachers demonstrated a clear understanding of the educational purposes of English instruction and reported instructional practices that were broadly consistent with those purposes. However, several responses also indicate that alignment remains constrained by teachers' perceived limitations in English teaching expertise, suggesting that understanding organizational goals alone does not necessarily ensure their full enactment in classroom practice.

4.2 Institutional alignment is characterized by emerging support, but limited formal implementation

Beyond teachers' understanding of the goals of English instruction, participants also described how their schools supported the implementation of English learning. Many teachers reported that schools had begun providing various forms of support, particularly through the provision of instructional resources and opportunities for teacher development. Frequently mentioned initiatives included English textbooks, learning media, LCD projectors, interactive flat panels, internet access, school libraries, and teacher participation in English-related training. Several participants also described efforts to foster an English-friendly learning environment through classroom routines and literacy activities. These findings suggest that schools have started creating conditions that facilitate English teaching, although the extent of support varies across contexts. For example, P8 explained, *"Sekolah menyediakan buku paket, LCD, IFP, dan akses internet untuk menunjang pembelajaran bahasa Inggris."* Similarly, P16 highlighted the importance of professional development, *"Sekolah memberikan kesempatan guru mengikuti pelatihan bahasa Inggris agar kemampuan guru meningkat."* However, participants also acknowledged that such support was not always sufficient. Some teachers reported limited teaching resources, while others noted that they still relied on personal initiatives to prepare instructional materials. These responses indicate that institutional support remains uneven across schools.

Despite these supportive practices, most participants reported that their schools had not yet established formal programs specifically designed to strengthen English learning. Responses such as *"Tidak ada"* (P1, P4, P7, P21, P25, P29), *"Belum ada"* (P2, P3, P6, P17, P18, P26), and *"Sejauh ini belum ada"* (P5, P13, P33) dominated the data. Only a few participants described school-based initiatives beyond regular classroom instruction, including extracurricular English poetry (P15), supplementary English classes (P19), daily vocabulary routines (P30), and the use of simple English expressions during classroom interaction (P14, P32). These initiatives appeared to be isolated practices rather than school-wide programs.

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Interestingly, participants generally perceived strong support from school leaders and colleagues despite the absence of formal programs. Most described principals and fellow teachers as recognizing the importance of English for students' future and expressing positive attitudes toward its implementation. As P18 stated, *"Kepala sekolah sangat mendukung adanya pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Rekan sejawat juga cukup bersemangat untuk ikut belajar bahasa Inggris."* Similarly, P31 commented: *"Rekan sejawat, baik guru maupun kepala sekolah, memiliki pandangan positif terhadap pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Kepala sekolah biasanya mendukung kegiatan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris melalui penyediaan program dan fasilitas pendukung, sedangkan guru-guru mendukung dengan ikut menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang aktif dan menyenangkan."*

Viewed through the ACE framework, these findings suggest that institutional alignment is developing but has not yet been fully operationalized. Schools generally share the belief that English instruction is important and have begun providing resources and supportive environments for its implementation. However, these efforts have not yet been translated into systematic school-wide programs. This indicates that alignment currently exists more strongly at the level of shared commitment and emerging practices than at the level of institutional structures and long-term strategic implementation.

4.3 Teachers perceive capability as developing English language competence through continuous self-directed learning

The findings indicate that participants primarily perceived capability in terms of their own English language competence rather than pedagogical expertise. Most teachers positioned themselves at a beginner or developing level, describing strengths in receptive skills such as reading and understanding simple English while acknowledging persistent challenges in productive skills, particularly speaking. Across the responses, teachers consistently identified vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, listening, and confidence as areas requiring further development.

Several participants explicitly described their English proficiency as still basic. For example, P2 stated, *"Masih level sangat pemula, saya hanya mampu memahami beberapa kalimat bahasa Inggris. Saya harus memperbanyak lagi kosakata dan pemahaman terkait bahasa Inggris."* Similarly, P27 wrote, *"Kemampuan bahasa Inggris saya masih berada di level dasar A1, perlu bimbingan dan peningkatan kompetensi di bidang bahasa Inggris."* Even participants who considered themselves reasonably capable continued to identify specific areas for improvement. P24 explained, *"Saya sudah mampu memahami percakapan dan teks sederhana, serta dapat menggunakan bahasa Inggris dalam komunikasi sehari-hari dan kegiatan pembelajaran dasar. Namun, masih ada beberapa hal yang perlu saya kembangkan, seperti kemampuan berbicara dengan lebih lancar, memperkaya kosakata, meningkatkan pronunciation, dan memahami grammar yang lebih kompleks."* Likewise, P28 described having reached the A2 level while emphasizing the need to improve speaking fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and confidence in using English actively.

These responses reveal that participants generally viewed capability as a continuum rather than a fixed condition. Instead of categorizing themselves as either capable or incapable, teachers recognized both their existing competencies and the aspects that still required improvement. Across almost all responses, productive language skills –

particularly speaking – emerged as the area in which teachers felt least confident, even when they demonstrated adequate reading or comprehension skills.

Participants also described numerous strategies for improving their English competence, indicating that capability was actively developed through continuous learning. Most learning activities were self-directed and informal, including reading English books, watching films or YouTube videos, listening to English songs, learning through social media such as TikTok, using language learning applications, memorizing vocabulary, and practicing English in daily life. Many teachers also emphasized learning through professional development opportunities, particularly the PKGSD-MBI training, while others highlighted collaborative learning with colleagues. For example, P7 explained, *"Dengan menonton film & drama dengan subtitle bahasa Inggris, mendengar lagu bahasa Inggris, tentunya ikut pelatihan berbahasa Inggris PKGSD-MBI."* P13 similarly highlighted collaborative learning, *"Giatkan berbicara bahasa Inggris dengan rekan sejawat agar bisa sama-sama belajar. Kita juga bisa menggunakan berbagai macam media yang ada, bisa lewat lagu, film, ataupun game."* Meanwhile, P28 demonstrated a more structured learning approach by combining multiple learning resources, *"Saya mempelajari dan meningkatkan kompetensi bahasa Inggris secara bertahap dan konsisten melalui berbagai kegiatan belajar mandiri. belajar menggunakan aplikasi Duolingo setiap hari, rutin mengerjakan LMS setiap minggunya, serta membiasakan diri mendengar dan menggunakan bahasa Inggris sederhana dalam aktivitas sehari-hari."*

Viewed through the ACE framework, these findings suggest that teachers interpret capability primarily as the development of English language competence. Rather than perceiving capability as a qualification acquired prior to teaching, participants regarded it as an evolving capacity strengthened through continuous self-directed learning, professional training, and regular practice. This indicates that capability is experienced as an ongoing developmental process, in which teachers actively seek opportunities to improve the linguistic competence needed to fulfil their teaching responsibilities.

4.4 Manifestation of pedagogical capability in classroom practice

Participants' classroom accounts illustrate how their developing pedagogical capability was translated into instructional practice. Although the lesson topics and classroom activities varied across participants, the responses revealed a broadly consistent instructional pattern. Most teachers described beginning their lessons by establishing learning objectives (P7, P18, P24, P25, P28, P29, P30, P31, P33) selecting learning materials relevant to the curriculum (P9, P14, P24, P28, P29, P31), preparing instructional media (P9, P24, P28, P29, P30, P31, P32, P33), and designing activities appropriate to primary school learners (P8, P9, P13, P24, P29, P32, P33). These preparatory processes suggest that participants viewed lesson planning as an essential component of effective English instruction rather than merely an administrative requirement.

During lesson implementation, teachers reported employing a wide range of instructional strategies to facilitate students' engagement with English. The most frequently described practices included the use of visual media/pictures (P2, P9, P24, P28, P29, P31, P33), songs (P6, P19, P28, P31), games (P23, P24, P25, P28, P29, P31, P33), dialogues (P23, P24, P29, P31), and digital learning tools (P4, P14, P25). Rather than

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presenting English as isolated vocabulary or grammar, many participants attempted to contextualize learning through familiar topics such as self-introduction (P24, P30), family (P27), daily activities (P13, P24), food (P8, P10, P31), body parts (P14, P28), school (P33), and environmental awareness. Several teachers also described providing opportunities for students to practice English through pair work (P23, P24, P28 P29), group discussions (P8, P33), classroom presentations (P10, P33), and other meaningful activities.

Participants consistently emphasized the importance of creating enjoyable and supportive learning environments to encourage students' participation. Across the responses, students were commonly described as enthusiastic (P7, P8, P9, P14, P15, P18, P20, P23, P25, P32), actively involved (P24, P28, P31), and increasingly confident (P23, P24, P28, P29, P31, P32) when English learning was delivered through interactive activities. Although several teachers acknowledged that some learners were initially hesitant to speak English (P24, P28, P29), they reported that encouragement, modelling, and repeated opportunities to practice gradually increased students' willingness to use the language during classroom activities.

These classroom accounts demonstrate that participants had begun to operationalize their pedagogical knowledge through structured lesson planning and interactive instructional practices. While teachers continued to perceive limitations in their own English proficiency, the examples provided suggest that many were able to organize lessons, select appropriate learning activities, and facilitate meaningful classroom interaction. Within the ACE framework, these findings indicate that capability extends beyond linguistic competence to encompass the pedagogical capacity to design and implement learning experiences that support young learners' engagement with English.

4.5 Teachers support English learning by integrating classroom English and diverse instructional resources

Participants reported that they attempted to create an English-rich classroom environment by incorporating simple classroom English into daily instructional routines and utilizing a variety of learning media to support students' understanding and engagement. Rather than limiting English to the presentation of lesson content, many teachers used English consistently throughout different stages of classroom interaction to familiarize students with authentic language use.

The classroom expressions reported by participants served various pedagogical functions. Most teachers began lessons with greetings and social interaction, using expressions such as *"Good morning," "How are you today?,"* and *"Are you ready to study?"* (P2, P6, P12, P13, P17, P23, P24, P28, P29, P30, P31, P32, P33). During instruction, teachers commonly employed simple classroom management expressions, including *"Please open your book," "Listen carefully," "Repeat after me," "Sit down, please," "Raise your hand,"* and *"Work with your partner"* (P23, P24, P28, P31, P32). Positive reinforcement was another recurring feature, with teachers frequently encouraging students through expressions such as *"Good job," "Great," "Excellent,"* and *"Thank you"* (P2, P6, P12, P13, P17, P18, P19, P23, P24, P29, P31, P32, P33). Several participants also reported gradually expanding the range of classroom expressions and encouraging students to respond in English using simple expressions such as *"I'm fine," "Yes, Miss/Sir,"* and *"May I go out?"* (P24). These responses indicate that

participants viewed classroom English not merely as a teaching technique but as a means of building students' familiarity and confidence in using English for everyday classroom communication.

Participants likewise described employing diverse instructional resources to facilitate English learning. Conventional teaching materials such as textbooks, worksheets, pictures, flashcards, posters, and real objects remained widely used (P2, P7, P8, P15, P20, P22, P23, P28–P33). At the same time, many teachers incorporated audio-visual resources, including videos, songs, audio recordings, and animated films, to enhance students' listening skills and maintain classroom engagement (P1, P5, P6, P9, P16, P20, P24–P33). Digital technologies also featured prominently, with participants reporting the use of PowerPoint, interactive whiteboards (IFP/PID), projectors, Canva, Wordwall, Quizizz, Kahoot, and YouTube to create more interactive learning experiences (P3, P4, P10, P14, P18, P21, P29, P31, P32, P33). Across the responses, teachers consistently emphasized that instructional media were selected not only to present language content but also to make learning more engaging, interactive, and accessible for young learners.

Taken together, these findings suggest that participants perceived effective English instruction as extending beyond teachers' linguistic competence. Their responses demonstrate efforts to increase students' exposure to English through routine classroom communication while simultaneously employing varied instructional resources to scaffold comprehension and participation. Within the ACE framework, these practices illustrate an important dimension of Capability, whereby teachers translated their developing knowledge into practical instructional strategies that supported meaningful English learning.

4.6 Teachers demonstrate strong motivation to teach English despite limited opportunities for broader school engagement

Participants consistently expressed strong enthusiasm and commitment toward teaching English at the primary school level. Although the specific reasons varied, the responses converged around several recurring motivations, including preparing students for future education, equipping them with skills for an increasingly globalized world, fostering students' confidence in using English, and pursuing teachers' own professional growth. These findings indicate that participants perceived English teaching not merely as an additional instructional responsibility but as an important investment in students' future development.

Many participants emphasized student-oriented motivations. They viewed English as an essential life skill that should be introduced from an early age to prepare learners for future academic and professional demands. For example, P24 explained, *"Motivasi terbesar saya untuk mengajar bahasa Inggris di SD adalah saya percaya bahwa pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di sekolah dasar dapat menjadi bekal penting bagi siswa untuk pendidikan dan masa depan mereka. Selain itu, saya merasa senang ketika melihat siswa mulai berani berbicara, memahami kosakata baru, dan lebih percaya diri menggunakan bahasa Inggris."* Similarly, P31 viewed English instruction as an opportunity to build students' confidence while preparing them for future challenges, *"Saya ingin siswa memiliki keberanian dan rasa percaya diri untuk menggunakan bahasa Inggris dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Selain itu, saya berharap pembelajaran*

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bahasa Inggris dapat menjadi bekal yang bermanfaat bagi pendidikan dan masa depan siswa di era globalisasi." Beyond supporting students, several participants also described teaching English as an opportunity for their own professional development. Rather than viewing the new responsibility as an additional burden, they perceived it as a chance to improve their English competence and become better educators. P28, for instance, stated: *"Saya juga ingin terus mengembangkan kemampuan diri sebagai guru agar dapat memberikan pembelajaran yang lebih baik dan membantu mempersiapkan siswa menghadapi perkembangan zaman serta kebutuhan di masa depan."*

Interestingly, participants' strong motivation was not always accompanied by opportunities to engage in broader English-related activities at school. Most respondents reported that their schools had not yet established English clubs, competitions, extracurricular programs, or other initiatives to strengthen students' English learning. Consequently, many participants indicated that their current involvement remained limited to classroom instruction or participation in professional development programs.

Nevertheless, a smaller group of teachers demonstrated more active engagement by initiating or supporting English-related activities within their schools. Their involvement included coaching students for competitions, organizing simple English performances, supervising extracurricular activities, establishing English Club programs, implementing classroom English routines, and participating in the PKGSD-MBI training program. These examples suggest that when institutional opportunities were available, teachers were willing to extend their engagement beyond regular classroom teaching to strengthen students' English learning experiences.

Taken together, these findings suggest that engagement within the ACE framework is characterized not only by teachers' willingness and commitment to teach English but also by the opportunities available for translating that commitment into professional action. While participants consistently demonstrated strong personal motivation, their broader engagement was often shaped by the extent to which schools provided programs and institutional support for English learning.

5. DISCUSSION

The present study explored primary school teachers' readiness to teach English in response to Indonesia's forthcoming policy mandating English instruction at the primary level. The findings suggest that readiness extends beyond teachers' English proficiency, emerging instead as a multidimensional construct encompassing organizational alignment, pedagogical capability, and professional engagement. Although the participants generally lacked formal qualifications in English language teaching, they demonstrated an emerging readiness through organizational support, continuous professional learning, and strong personal commitment. At the same time, this readiness remained constrained by limited institutional opportunities to enact English teaching beyond regular classroom practice. These findings reinforce the proposition of the ACE framework that readiness for educational change is shaped not only by individual competence but also by the organizational conditions that enable teachers to align with, develop capacity for, and actively engage in change initiatives (Lynch & Smith, 2016; Schiemann, 2012).

The findings further demonstrate that organizational alignment served as an important foundation for teachers' readiness. Participants generally understood the

rationale behind the compulsory English policy and perceived support from school leaders through policy dissemination, encouragement, and participation in professional development activities. This shared understanding appears to have fostered psychological readiness for change (Angraeni & Yusuf, 2022), even though many schools were still in the early stages of preparing for implementation. These findings are consistent with the ACE model, which emphasizes that readiness begins with individuals' alignment with organizational goals, expectations, and strategic directions (Madden, 2017; Lynch et al., 2017). They also extend previous studies that primarily highlighted teachers' perceived preparedness (Angraeni & Yusuf, 2022; Padmadewi et al., 2020) by demonstrating that organizational support constitutes an equally important dimension of readiness.

The study also highlights that pedagogical capability is developmental rather than static. Rather than relying solely on prior qualifications, participants described strengthening their capability through professional learning, self-directed study, and practical classroom experience. Their responses further showed that this developing capability was reflected in lesson planning, the use of classroom English, and the integration of diverse instructional resources to support young learners. This finding is also reflected in a study by Mafulah et al. (2025), which found that primary school English teachers drew on a range of technological resources, including PowerPoint, Canva, YouTube, Baamboozle, and Wordwall, to support English instruction and create more interactive and engaging learning environments for young learners. Beyond the use of technological resources, engaging English instruction may also be supported through interactive teaching methods. For example, Primasari and Winarsih (2022) found that the use of songs as an instructional resource supported English vocabulary learning among primary school students and contributed to a more enjoyable and active classroom environment. Similarly, Rahmawati et al. (2025) demonstrated that the implementation of a vocabulary journal strategy involved active teacher participation, particularly through regular feedback and review, which resulted in the improvement of student vocabulary. These findings reinforce the present study that developing pedagogical capability involves not only improving teachers' English proficiency but also developing their ability to select and implement instructional resources and methods appropriate for young learners.

The findings of this study also suggest that professional development initiatives such as the PKGSD-MBI program may play an important role in strengthening teachers' capability to implement compulsory English, particularly for classroom teachers without formal backgrounds in English language education. This interpretation is consistent with previous research showing that teacher training can produce a substantial and immediate increase in non-specialist English teachers' self-efficacy (Matsumura & Hinoki, 2025). The emergence of the PKGSD-MBI program also addresses the urgent need for tailored professional development for non-specialist English teachers. Rather than relying solely on self-directed learning, the program provides a structured pathway through which teachers develop both their English proficiency and pedagogical competence while receiving guided support for classroom implementation (Widagsa et al., 2025).

Finally, the findings reveal an important distinction between teachers' motivation and their opportunities for professional engagement. While participants consistently expressed strong commitment to supporting students' English learning and viewed English as an important competency for the future, many reported limited opportunities to participate in English-related programs beyond classroom teaching. This indicates that

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high individual engagement does not automatically translate into broader professional participation when schools have yet to establish supporting programs such as English clubs, competitions, or language enrichment activities. This finding complements the notion that engagement encompasses not only willingness and commitment but also opportunities to contribute meaningfully within an organization (Madden, 2017; Lynch et al., 2017). From a policy perspective, preparing schools for the 2027 implementation should therefore involve not only improving teachers' language proficiency and pedagogical competence but also strengthening school-based support systems that enable teachers to translate their motivation into sustained professional practice.

6. CONCLUSION

This study explored primary school teachers' readiness to teach English in response to Indonesia's forthcoming compulsory English policy using the ACE framework. The findings suggest that teacher readiness is a multidimensional construct shaped by organizational alignment, developing pedagogical capability, and strong professional engagement. While participants demonstrated positive readiness through policy awareness, continuous professional learning, and commitment to students' English learning, institutional support beyond classroom instruction remained limited. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening not only teachers' linguistic and pedagogical competence but also school-level support to facilitate the successful implementation of compulsory English in Indonesian primary schools.

This study was limited to participants from one PKGSD-MBI training cohort in South Kalimantan and relied on self-reported questionnaire data, which may not fully reflect teachers' actual classroom practices. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted within the context of the participants and the early stage of policy implementation. Future research could incorporate classroom observations and interviews to examine how teachers' perceived readiness is reflected in their instructional practices. Comparative or longitudinal studies across different regions would also provide a broader understanding of how teacher readiness evolves throughout the implementation of the compulsory English policy.

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