

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Discussion / Theoretical Description

2.1.1 The Concepts of Teaching and Readiness in Teacher Education

Teaching is often misunderstood as simply standing in front of a class and delivering content. In reality, it is a highly complex and cognitively demanding activity. Teachers are constantly making quick decisions deciding how to respond to a student's answer, adjusting an explanation that is not landing well, managing the social dynamics of a group, and keeping track of where the lesson is going all at the same time. This requires teachers to act simultaneously as lesson designers, facilitators of learning, and ongoing evaluators of their own instruction.

Shulman (1986) captured this complexity well when he argued that effective teaching requires the integration of at least three types of knowledge: content knowledge (knowing the subject), pedagogical knowledge (knowing how to teach it), and knowledge of learners (understanding who you are teaching). This means that being a good teacher is not just about knowing English well it is about knowing how to make that knowledge accessible to students with different needs, backgrounds, and levels of ability.

Alongside teaching, the concept of readiness is equally important in teacher education. Readiness does not simply mean having the technical skills to write a lesson plan or explain a grammar rule. It refers to a more holistic internal state being mentally prepared, professionally motivated, and emotionally equipped to take on the full demands of teaching. Livingston (2023) pointed out that today's teachers work in constantly shifting environments, from curriculum changes and digital integration to the need to respond to increasingly diverse classrooms. Against this backdrop, readiness becomes less of a fixed endpoint and more of an ongoing capacity to adapt and keep learning.

When these two ideas are brought together, teaching readiness can be understood as an individual's overall preparedness to carry out teaching responsibilities effectively and responsibly in a real classroom. It is not something

that appears overnight; it builds gradually through academic study, practical teaching experience such as the Teaching Practicum (PPL), and the kind of professional reflection that comes from actually working with students. For pre-service EFL teachers specifically, this readiness spans multiple areas: being able to design engaging lessons, having a solid enough command of the language to serve as a model for students, and feeling psychologically stable enough to manage the pressures that come with the job. Research consistently shows that direct classroom experience plays a meaningful role in developing this readiness (Livingston, 2023), which is why the practicum is generally considered a cornerstone of teacher education programs.

2.1.2 What Teaching Readiness Means

In teacher education, teaching readiness refers to more than just being able to walk into a classroom and get through a lesson. It describes the degree to which a pre-service teacher is genuinely prepared cognitively, pedagogically, psychologically, and professionally to conduct meaningful instruction across a variety of classroom situations. A teacher who is ready in this fuller sense does not only know what to teach; they also know how to teach it, how to manage themselves and their students under pressure, and how to act responsibly as an emerging professional.

Livingston (2023) linked teaching readiness closely to self-efficacy a teacher's belief in their own capacity to handle the actual tasks of teaching. For pre-service EFL teachers, this self-efficacy tends to develop through hands-on experience: microteaching sessions, the PPL practicum, and critical reflection on what went well and what did not. Research consistently shows that the practicum experience is one of the most influential factors in developing professional teaching readiness, contributing substantially more than theoretical coursework alone (Livingston, 2023). Conceptually, teaching readiness is understood to have four main dimensions, each of which contributes to the overall picture in a different way.

2.1.2.1 Cognitive Readiness

Cognitive readiness refers to how well a pre-service teacher understands the subject matter, the curriculum, and the broader educational context in which they will be teaching. For EFL teachers, this means more than just knowing grammar rules or vocabulary lists; it means being able to organise that knowledge and present it in ways that students can actually understand and apply. Shulman (1986) called this pedagogical content knowledge (PCK): the ability to translate academic knowledge into something contextually relevant for learners. A teacher who knows a grammar concept but cannot explain it in multiple ways, or cannot connect it to a student's experience, is cognitively prepared only in a surface sense.

2.1.2.2 Pedagogical Readiness

Pedagogical readiness is about the practical side of instruction: designing lesson plans, choosing methods and materials, managing classroom activities, and assessing student learning in ways that are fair and meaningful. In EFL contexts, this includes the ability to plan interactive tasks (pair work, role plays, project-based activities), select appropriate texts and audio materials, and build assessments that measure real communicative ability rather than just memorisation. Shulman (1986) was clear that strong content knowledge without pedagogical skill produces technically accurate but often ineffective teaching. Research on EFL teacher preparation generally confirms this: pedagogical confidence is strongly associated with a teacher's willingness to take instructional risks and try new approaches.

2.1.2.3 Psychological Readiness

Psychological readiness involves the emotional and mental side of teaching: managing stress, staying confident under pressure, building positive relationships with students, and recovering from mistakes without losing motivation. This dimension is particularly relevant in EFL classrooms, where teachers often face students who are anxious about speaking in English, and where the teacher's own English anxiety can compound the problem. Research on teacher self-efficacy consistently shows that higher levels of psychological

readiness are associated with better classroom performance, partly because confident teachers create more supportive learning environments (Livingston, 2023). The ability to reflect on one's own performance and accept critical feedback constructively is also part of this dimension something that the practicum experience is specifically designed to develop.

2.1.2.4 Professional Readiness

Professional readiness refers to an understanding of what it means to be a teacher as a social and ethical role, not just a technical one. For EFL teachers, this includes seeing themselves not only as language instructors but also as cultural mediators and models of communicative competence. It also involves a commitment to ongoing professional development keeping up with changes in curriculum and policy (such as Indonesia's Merdeka Curriculum), integrating technology meaningfully into instruction, and approaching the profession with a sense of ethical responsibility toward students and the broader educational community. Livingston (2023) argued that professional readiness is shaped not only by individual capacity but also by the quality of teacher education programs and the institutional support pre-service teachers receive during their training.

2.1.2.5 Self-Efficacy and Practical Experience

Running through all four dimensions is the concept of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997, 1998) the individual's belief that they can actually perform the tasks required of them. In teaching, this means believing you can manage a class, support diverse learners, and improve when things go wrong. Research consistently shows that practical experience is the most reliable way to build this belief: the practicum, microteaching, and even informal tutoring all contribute significantly to how ready a pre-service teacher feels (Livingston, 2023). Beyond experience, academic achievement, genuine interest in teaching, and the support of supervisors also play a role.

The key point is that teaching readiness is not a fixed trait it is something that develops over time through the interaction of knowledge, experience, and belief. In the context of this study, understanding teaching readiness in this multidimensional way matters because it allows us to ask a more precise question:

does how pre-service EFL teachers perceive a listening-focused course like Listening to TOEFL and IELTS have any bearing on how ready they feel to teach?

2.1.3 Dimensions of Teaching Readiness

Teaching readiness is best understood not as a single quality but as a set of interconnected dimensions that together determine how prepared a pre-service teacher is to enter a real classroom. The four dimensions cognitive, pedagogical, psychological, and professional do not operate independently. Each one feeds into the others, and a weakness in one area tends to affect the rest. For pre-service EFL teachers, this interconnectedness is especially important because the demands of teaching a foreign language are layered: you need subject knowledge, practical skills, emotional stability, and a clear professional identity, all at once.

2.1.3.1 Cognitive Dimension

The cognitive dimension is concerned with what a pre-service teacher knows their understanding of the language itself, the curriculum they will be implementing, and the learning context they will be working in. For EFL teachers, this foundational knowledge is crucial because the accuracy of their language directly affects the quality of the input their students receive. A teacher who is uncertain about a grammar point, for example, may avoid teaching it altogether, or teach it in a way that actually creates confusion.

Shulman's (1986) framework remains useful here: he distinguished between content knowledge (knowing what) and pedagogical content knowledge (knowing how to make the "what" teachable). In EFL contexts, this means a teacher needs to not only understand English grammar in the abstract but also know how to explain it through examples, analogies, and tasks that connect to students' actual lives. Research on curriculum implementation in Indonesia has also shown that teachers who understand the purpose and structure of the curriculum not just its technical requirements are significantly better at planning lessons that are both coherent and meaningful.

2.1.3.2 Pedagogical Dimension

Pedagogical readiness is where knowledge meets practice. It includes the ability to design lesson plans that are appropriately challenging for students, select teaching strategies that suit different learning goals, manage the flow of activities in a lesson, and assess student performance in ways that actually inform instruction. In EFL teaching, this might involve designing a reading task that develops critical thinking rather than just comprehension, or structuring a speaking activity that gives students enough support to participate without relying on memorised scripts.

As Shulman (1986) argued, content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge must work together. A teacher who knows the material but cannot present it effectively is not actually ready to teach it well. Pedagogical readiness also involves adaptability the ability to shift strategy when something is not working. Research on EFL teacher preparation has found that teachers who are flexible in this way are better able to integrate technology, respond to different student ability levels, and maintain lesson quality even when the original plan does not go smoothly.

2.1.3.3 Psychological Dimension

The psychological dimension encompasses the mental and emotional aspects of teaching. Pre-service EFL teachers regularly face situations that are psychologically demanding: students who are reluctant to speak English, unexpected classroom conflicts, critical feedback from supervisors, and the general uncertainty of being new to a professional role. How well a pre-service teacher manages these pressures has a direct bearing on the quality of their instruction.

Livingston (2023) linked this dimension to professional confidence and the capacity for reflective practice being able to look honestly at what went wrong and adjust accordingly, rather than either ignoring mistakes or becoming discouraged by them. In EFL specifically, English speaking anxiety and teaching anxiety are well-documented phenomena that can significantly reduce a teacher's effectiveness if left unmanaged. Psychological readiness helps pre-service

teachers build the kind of resilience and emotional regulation that allows them to keep growing even when things are difficult.

2.1.3.4 Professional Dimension

Professional readiness goes beyond technical skill and into questions of identity and ethics. It involves understanding what it means to be a teacher in a particular social and institutional context what responsibilities come with the role, how to relate to students from diverse backgrounds, and how to keep developing professionally once formal training is over. For EFL teachers in Indonesia, this also means being responsive to current educational policies such as the Merdeka Curriculum and understanding how listening-focused coursework such as Listening to TOEFL and IELTS fits into the broader landscape of English education.

Livingston (2023) found that professional readiness is shaped significantly by the quality of teacher education programs and institutional support systems. This suggests that individual effort alone is not sufficient institutions also have a responsibility to create conditions in which pre-service teachers can develop their professional identity in a meaningful way. by the quality of teacher education programs and institutional support systems. This suggests that individual effort alone is not sufficient institutions also have a responsibility to create conditions in which pre-service teachers can develop their professional identity in a meaningful way. A commitment to lifelong learning is central to this dimension: the willingness to read, reflect, collaborate with colleagues, and update one's practice in response to new research and policy directions.

Taken together, these four dimensions form an integrated picture of what it means to be ready to teach. In the context of this study, they also provide a structure for examining how different types of readiness might be affected by or associated with how pre-service teachers perceive a listening-focused course like Listening to TOEFL and IELTS. This connection will be explored more concretely in the sections that follow.

2.1.4 Teaching Readiness in the Context of Pre-Service EFL Teachers

Teaching readiness takes on a particular character when the subject being taught is English as a Foreign Language. EFL teachers are not only expected to have general pedagogical competence they are also expected to have a high enough command of the language to serve as a linguistic model for their students. In many EFL contexts, including Indonesia, the English classroom is the primary and sometimes the only structured environment where students are regularly exposed to the target language. This places a considerable responsibility on the teacher's language proficiency.

A pre-service teacher who feels uncertain about their English tends to respond in predictable ways: they avoid interactive activities, rely on teacher-centred instruction, limit their use of English as the medium of communication, and reduce the amount of authentic language input available to students. Over time, this affects not just lesson quality but also students' overall exposure to meaningful English use. By contrast, a pre-service teacher who feels confident in their language ability is generally more willing to conduct lessons in English, create space for genuine communication, and design activities that require students to use the language in varied and authentic ways.

2.1.4.1 Pedagogical Flexibility and Psychological Readiness

Beyond language proficiency, EFL teaching demands a high degree of pedagogical flexibility. EFL classrooms in Indonesia are typically heterogeneous: some students are confident communicators while others are extremely anxious about speaking English, some grasp new material quickly while others need more time and scaffolding. Pre-service teachers need to be able to design activities that address this range, adapt their approach when a strategy is not working, and ensure that no group of students is consistently left behind.

This flexibility increasingly includes the ability to use digital tools and platforms effectively whether for delivering content, supporting independent practice, or assessing student learning. Research on EFL teacher readiness has found that teachers who are pedagogically flexible tend to be better at responding to curriculum changes, integrating technology appropriately, and maintaining

instructional quality across different learning contexts (Borg, 2006; Livingston, 2023).

Psychological readiness matters here too. Many EFL students experience language anxiety a reluctance or fear of making mistakes when using English which can suppress participation and limit learning. A pre-service teacher who is psychologically ready understands that part of their job is to create an environment where students feel safe to take communicative risks. This requires emotional sensitivity, the ability to build rapport, and a genuine confidence in their own professional capacity.

2.1.4.2 Teaching Readiness as a Multidimensional Construct

Given these unique demands, teaching readiness for pre-service EFL teachers is best understood as a multidimensional construct that is sensitive to the specific context of foreign language education. Researchers have described it as encompassing cognitive readiness (content and curriculum knowledge), pedagogical readiness, psychological readiness, and professional readiness, with each dimension reinforcing the others (Livingston, 2023). In EFL specifically, language proficiency is woven through all four dimensions, because a teacher's relationship with the language they are teaching directly shapes their confidence, their instructional choices, and their professional identity (Livingston, 2023; Borg, 2006).

Research on EFL pre-service teacher readiness has identified a number of factors that consistently appear relevant: self-confidence, technological skills, language proficiency, and the quality of institutional support through workshops, mentoring, and structured practicum experiences (Borg, 2006; Livingston, 2023). Self-efficacy in particular has been found to correlate positively with perceived classroom English proficiency meaning that the more confident a pre-service teacher feels about their language ability, the more ready they feel to use English actively in instruction (Bandura, 1997).

This brings the discussion to a question that motivates the present study: if language confidence and self-efficacy are so central to teaching readiness in EFL contexts, might perceptions of a listening-focused course like Listening to TOEFL

and IELTS play a role in shaping that confidence? The course does not simply produce a set of listening scores it produces an experience and an interpretation of that experience, both of which may feed into how pre-service teachers see themselves as language users and as emerging professionals. Research on standardised listening tests and self-efficacy suggests that how test-related feedback is perceived whether as affirming or deflating can meaningfully influence a person's linguistic self-concept and readiness to teach (Mir, 2022; Khidirov & Lee, 2025). This connection forms the basis for the conceptual link between the two variables in this study.

2.1.5 Teaching Readiness and Teacher Cognition: Borg's Perspective

Understanding why teaching readiness develops the way it does and why two pre-service teachers with similar training might still feel very differently about their preparedness requires looking beyond observable skills and into the internal world of beliefs and interpretations. This is where Simon Borg's (2006) framework of teacher cognition becomes particularly useful.

Borg argued that teachers are not passive implementers of curriculum or instruction; they are active decision-makers whose classroom behaviour is guided by a rich and often largely implicit system of beliefs, knowledge, and prior experience. What a teacher does in the classroom is, in many ways, a reflection of what they think, know, and believe about language, about learning, about their students, and about themselves as professionals. This internal cognitive system is not formed overnight. It builds gradually through years of experience as a language learner, formal teacher education, interactions with professional standards, and the actual practice of teaching.

For pre-service EFL teachers, this means that their readiness to teach is not just a matter of how many lesson plans they have written or how many hours they have spent in the practicum classroom. It is also shaped by what they believe teaching requires, how they interpret feedback on their performance, and how they understand their own relationship to the language they are preparing to teach. A pre-service teacher who genuinely believes that language proficiency is central to teaching effectiveness, for instance, will approach language development very

differently from one who sees it as secondary to pedagogical skill. Both teachers might have similar formal preparation, but their readiness as experienced from the inside could be quite different.

2.1.5.1 Teacher Cognition in Borg's Framework

Borg (2006) was careful to emphasise that teacher cognition is dynamic, not fixed. It develops through a cycle of experience and reflection: prior learning shapes beliefs, those beliefs influence how teaching is planned and carried out, and the results of that practice then feed back into and often revise the original beliefs. This cyclical process is directly relevant to pre-service teachers, who are in the middle of that developmental cycle their beliefs are still being shaped, which means they are particularly sensitive to the experiences and standards they encounter during their training.

In EFL contexts, this includes exposure to listening-focused coursework such as Listening to TOEFL and IELTS. If a pre-service teacher has taken this course, that experience does not disappear once it is over. It gets absorbed into their cognitive system reinforcing or complicating their beliefs about their own listening competence, about what good listening comprehension looks and sounds like, and about what kind of English teacher they are on their way to becoming.

2.1.5.2 Teaching Readiness as an Expression of Teacher Cognition

Viewed through Borg's lens, teaching readiness is essentially an expression of a pre-service teacher's cognitive and affective state at a given point in their development. It is not simply a performance rating or a checklist of skills it is how a person internalises the demands of the profession and whether they believe themselves capable of meeting those demands. A pre-service teacher might have technically adequate language skills, but if they believe those skills are insufficient for real classroom teaching, their perceived readiness will be low. Conversely, a pre-service teacher who has genuine gaps in their knowledge but maintains a strong sense of professional agency and a belief in their capacity to grow, may report higher readiness because they see those gaps as temporary and manageable.

In the context of this study, this framework provides the conceptual bridge between the two main variables. How pre-service teachers perceive the Listening to TOEFL and IELTS course whether as a genuine opportunity to build professional competence, as an arbitrary hurdle, or as a useful learning benchmark is not just a matter of opinion. It is a cognitive stance that has the potential to influence their self-efficacy, their approach to language development, and ultimately their overall sense of teaching readiness. This is why the relationship between perception of the course and teaching readiness is not simply technical; it is fundamentally psychological and cognitive, which is exactly the kind of relationship that Borg's framework is designed to illuminate.

2.1.6 Teaching Readiness as the Dependent Variable

Based on the theoretical discussion in the preceding sections, teaching readiness in this study is defined as the degree to which pre-service EFL teachers feel prepared to plan, manage, and deliver English language instruction effectively and responsibly across real classroom contexts. This readiness is understood to encompass cognitive, pedagogical, psychological, and professional dimensions, and is positioned as the dependent variable (Y) in this study, measured through a questionnaire instrument with indicators drawn from each of those four dimensions.

Importantly, teaching readiness is not treated here as a static attribute that a person either has or does not have. Drawing on Borg (2006), it is understood as a dynamic construct one that is shaped by the interaction between a pre-service teacher's knowledge, practical experience, and the beliefs they hold about themselves and their profession. This means that two pre-service teachers with similar formal preparation may report quite different levels of readiness, depending on how they have internalised their experiences and what they believe about their own competence.

A concrete illustration helps here. Consider a pre-service teacher who performs relatively well in the Listening to TOEFL and IELTS course but perceives the course as an authoritative judgment of their fundamental worth as a language teacher. For this person, any performance below their personal

expectation might translate into a reduced sense of professional legitimacy, which in turn lowers their reported readiness. Now consider a pre-service teacher with a more modest performance who views the course as a useful but imperfect benchmark for professional growth. This person is more likely to use the experience constructively building on what they learned about their listening strengths and gaps and may consequently report higher readiness despite the more modest performance. The difference between these two cases lies not in their objective ability but in how they have cognitively processed the same kind of experience.

This example illustrates why, in this study, teaching readiness cannot be understood in isolation from the perceptions that surround it. Perception specifically, how pre-service teachers perceive the Listening to TOEFL and IELTS course as a learning experience is positioned as the independent variable (X) that potentially shapes the dependent variable (Y). The theoretical basis for this relationship draws on Borg's (2006) teacher cognition framework, Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory, and Shulman's (1986) concept of pedagogical content knowledge, each of which will be revisited in the sections that follow.

2.2 Perceptions of the Listening to TOEFL and IELTS Course

2.2.1 The Concept of Perception in Teacher Cognition

Perception, in cognitive and psychological terms, is not simply the act of seeing or noticing something. It is an active interpretive process through which an individual receives information, selects what is relevant, organises it, and assigns meaning to it. Robbins and Judge (2023) described perception as a process that begins with sensory input but is quickly filtered through prior experience, values, and beliefs. Therefore, perception is never completely neutral. For example, two students may take the same Listening to TOEFL and IELTS course, attend the same classes, and receive the same learning materials. However, they may develop completely different interpretations of the course. One student may feel motivated and better prepared, whereas another may feel discouraged and question the usefulness of the course. The difference does not necessarily lie in

what objectively happens during the course, but in how each student interprets and understands the experience.

In teacher education, perception plays a particularly important role. Pre-service teachers receive continuous learning experiences through lectures, microteaching sessions, teaching practicums, and specialised courses such as Listening to TOEFL and IELTS. However, the extent to which these experiences influence their professional development depends on how they interpret and internalise them.

Borg (2006) placed perception at the centre of teacher cognition. He argued that teachers do not respond directly to external realities. Instead, they respond to their cognitive representations of those realities, which are influenced by their existing beliefs, knowledge, and interpretive habits. In the context of this study, the course itself does not automatically shape pre-service teachers' cognition. Rather, the influence of the course depends on how they perceive and understand their experiences while taking it.

2.2.2 How Perceptions Are Formed: A Theoretical View

Perceptions are not formed quickly or simply. They develop through a process of cognitive construction that takes place over time. During this process, individuals integrate new experiences with their existing beliefs, prior knowledge, and social environment. The perception of the Listening to TOEFL and IELTS course among pre-service teachers may be influenced by various factors. These factors include classroom activities, the difficulty of the listening materials, interactions with classmates and lecturers, the feedback received during the course, and the way students apply their learning during the Teaching Practicum. Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory provides a useful framework for understanding how perception is formed. One of the central concepts in this theory is self-efficacy, which refers to a person's belief in their ability to perform a particular task or overcome a specific challenge. Self-efficacy is influenced not only by objective performance but also by how a person interprets that performance. For example, a student who performs well in the course but attributes the success only to luck may not experience a meaningful increase in

self-efficacy. In contrast, a student who performs moderately but interprets the result as evidence of personal progress may develop stronger professional confidence.

Therefore, the perception of the course is influenced by the meaning that students assign to their learning experiences. A student who views the course as relevant and useful for future teaching may become more motivated to improve. Conversely, a student who views the course as excessively difficult or unrelated to teaching may experience lower motivation and confidence.

2.2.3 Perception as a Psychological Variable in Teacher Education

Perception does not merely describe how an individual views a situation. It can also influence what the individual does next. Bandura (1997) stated that self-efficacy is primarily developed through enactive mastery, namely the experience of successfully completing challenging tasks.

In the context of the Listening to TOEFL and IELTS course, enactive mastery may occur when students successfully understand a fast lecture, complete a note-taking activity, identify important information, or follow an unfamiliar English accent. These successful experiences may strengthen students' confidence in their listening ability.

Research on IELTS Listening has shown that test-takers' perceptions of listening materials, including which accents they consider manageable or unfairly difficult, can influence their engagement with the task (Kang, Miao, Hirschi, & Ahn, 2025). This finding supports the broader argument that learners' perceptions of listening instruction may influence their confidence and participation, rather than their objective performance alone.

A similar pattern was identified by Mir (2022), who examined IELTS test-takers in Pakistan. The study found that participants' perceptions of a high-stakes test component were influenced by their familiarity with the test format and the quality of feedback they received. Although Mir's study focused on the Speaking section rather than the Listening section, and involved general test-takers rather than pre-service teachers, the findings illustrate a pattern that may also apply to listening instruction. When a course is perceived as a meaningful professional

benchmark, it may become a source of self-efficacy development. However, when the course is experienced primarily as a source of pressure, it may reduce students' confidence even when their actual listening ability is adequate.

2.2.4 Dimensions of Perception of the Listening to TOEFL and IELTS Course

Based on the theoretical literature and the research context, the perception of the Listening to TOEFL and IELTS course among pre-service EFL teachers can be understood through three main dimensions.

The first dimension is perceived relevance and usefulness. Pre-service teachers who see the course as connected to their future profession are more likely to view it as an opportunity to develop useful skills. These skills include understanding different English accents, comprehending academic spoken English, identifying important information, and applying listening strategies that they may later teach to their students.

The second dimension is perceived difficulty and psychological pressure. Some students may experience TOEFL- and IELTS-based listening activities as a source of stress. Listening activities may be particularly demanding because the audio material is often played only once and cannot always be reviewed at the learner's preferred pace. This situation may create a cycle of anxiety and make it more difficult for students to demonstrate their actual listening comprehension.

The third dimension is professional value and identity. For many pre-service EFL teachers, the competence developed through the course may become an indicator of their confidence in listening. A pre-service teacher who believes that the course has genuinely improved their listening competence may also feel more credible and prepared to teach listening. In this sense, the course may contribute not only to test preparation but also to the development of professional identity and teaching readiness.

2.2.5 Perception of the Course as the Independent Variable

Based on the discussion above, the perception of the Listening to TOEFL and IELTS course in this study is defined as the subjective evaluation formed by pre-service EFL teachers regarding the relevance, difficulty, and professional

value of the course. This perception is a cognitively constructed orientation shaped by the interaction between course experiences, self-efficacy beliefs, prior knowledge, and the professional context in which pre-service teachers develop (Borg, 2006; Bandura, 1997).

Operationally, the perception variable is measured through perceived relevance and authenticity, strategic value of listening, pedagogical value, perceived difficulty, and professional value of the course. In this study, the perception variable is divided into three sub-variables. X1 represents the perception of TOEFL Listening, X2 represents the perception of IELTS Listening, and X3 represents the perceived positive impact of the course on teaching readiness. The perception of the course is positioned as the independent variable, whereas teaching readiness is positioned as the dependent variable.

2.3 Relationship Between Course Perception and Teaching Readiness

2.3.1 Perception of the Course and Its Impact on Teaching Readiness.

Courses such as Listening to TOEFL and IELTS serve a purpose that goes beyond simply preparing students for a test format. For pre-service EFL teachers, these courses also function as a space to practise directly the listening skills that they will eventually teach. How this experience is interpreted may influence the confidence of pre-service teachers in their own listening competence and, consequently, their readiness to design and deliver listening instruction. This includes planning listening-based lesson plans, selecting appropriate audio materials, applying suitable instructional strategies, and assessing students' listening comprehension.

Borg (2006) observed that a teacher's positive or negative orientation toward their own language competence is one of the significant factors influencing whether they use the target language confidently and consistently in the classroom. Pre-service teachers who complete the course with a positive perception of their own listening competence are more likely to design communicatively rich listening activities and model listening strategies confidently for their students. In contrast, pre-service teachers who feel that their

listening competence has not been sufficiently developed may be more hesitant to conduct listening instruction and demonstrate listening strategies in the classroom.

The perception of the course may also influence teaching readiness through the development of professional confidence. When pre-service teachers perceive the course as relevant to their future profession, they may be more motivated to connect the knowledge gained from the course with actual classroom practices. They may also become more prepared to select suitable listening materials, explain listening strategies, construct listening-based activities, and evaluate students' listening performance.

However, a positive perception of the course does not automatically guarantee a high level of teaching readiness. Teaching readiness is also influenced by practical teaching experience, self-efficacy, pedagogical knowledge, and opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in real or simulated classroom situations. Therefore, the relationship between course perception and teaching readiness should be examined empirically rather than assumed.

2.3.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study positions the perception of the Listening to TOEFL and IELTS course as a cognitive factor that may influence teaching readiness. This relationship is explained through the process of teacher cognition proposed by Borg (2006). The starting point is the pre-service teacher's experience of taking the course. This experience generates an interpretation of the meaning of the course for professional development and personal listening competence.

The interpretation of the course—whether it is perceived as useful preparation for teaching listening or merely as a burdensome academic requirement—forms the basis of the respondents' perception. This perception may then influence their beliefs about their own competence and readiness to teach. These beliefs are reflected in their reported levels of teaching readiness, including cognitive readiness, pedagogical readiness, psychological readiness, and professional readiness.

In this study, the perception variable is represented by three sub-variables. The first is the perception of TOEFL Listening (X1). The second is the perception of IELTS Listening (X2). The third is the perceived positive impact of the course on teaching readiness (X3). Teaching readiness is represented by Variable Y.

The relationship between the variables can be described as follows:

X1: Perception of TOEFL Listening → Y: Teaching Readiness

X2: Perception of IELTS Listening → Y: Teaching Readiness

X3: Perceived Positive Impact of the Course → Y: Teaching Readiness

Put simply, the more positively pre-service teachers perceive the relevance, value, and pedagogical usefulness of the course, the more likely they are to report a higher level of teaching readiness, particularly readiness to teach listening. This relationship does not mean that positive perception automatically improves listening ability. Rather, positive perception may help pre-service teachers interpret their course experience as meaningful for developing competence, professional identity, and teaching preparation (Bandura, 1997; Borg, 2006).

This study therefore examines whether the proposed relationships exist among pre-service EFL teachers in the English Education Study Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu. The relationships between X1, X2, X3, and Y are tested statistically through Spearman rank-order correlation because the data do not meet the assumption of normality.

2.4 Relevant Research Findings

To situate this study within existing scholarship, the following review examines research grouped into three thematic areas: (a) the general relationship between perception and teaching readiness, (b) teaching readiness among pre-service EFL teachers specifically, and (c) perceptions of TOEFL and IELTS listening assessment.

Theme 1: The Relationship Between Perception and Teaching Readiness

Zaini (2024) found a significant relationship between Indonesian teachers' perceptions of professional requirements under the Merdeka Curriculum and their

reported readiness and performance, although the study was not specific to EFL teachers or to any standardized international test. This finding supports the broader theoretical claim, made by Borg (2003), that what teachers think and believe about professional demands directly shapes how they prepare for and respond to those demands. The present study builds on this foundation by applying the same logic to a more specific context: how pre-service EFL teachers perceive a listening-focused test-preparation course, and whether that perception relates to their teaching readiness.

Theme 2: Teaching Readiness Among Pre-Service EFL Teachers

Livingston (2023) showed through a cross-national review that pedagogical and affective readiness among pre-service teachers varies significantly according to regional context, policy environment, and institutional support factors that are highly relevant to understanding readiness among Indonesian pre-service EFL teachers specifically. This highlights the importance of contextually grounded research on teaching readiness, particularly for a country like Indonesia, where EFL education is shaped by specific policy and cultural conditions, including the growing presence of TOEFL and IELTS preparation within English education curricula.

Theme 3: Perceptions of TOEFL and IELTS Listening

The third theme covers research specifically on how learners perceive TOEFL and IELTS, with a particular focus on the listening component. Kang, Miao, Hirschi, and Ahn (2025) examined how IELTS test-takers perceived different English accent varieties in the Listening test and found that test-takers generally preferred standard accents, and that these perceptions had implications for how the test should be taught and prepared for. This is one of the few studies to examine listening-specific perception directly, and it provides a strong empirical basis for treating perception of listening assessment as a distinct and measurable construct.

Mir (2022) examined how IELTS test-takers in Pakistan perceived the Speaking component of the test and found that participants held both positive and negative views shaped by their familiarity with the test format and the quality of

feedback they received. Although this study focused on Speaking rather than Listening, and on general test-takers rather than pre-service teachers, it illustrates the same underlying pattern: perceptions of a high-stakes test component are shaped by more than objective performance, and they carry real psychological consequences.

Khidirov and Lee (2025) examined Uzbek EFL students' perceptions of AI-generated feedback on IELTS Writing tasks and found that students generally viewed structured, task-specific feedback as valuable for improving their test performance. While this study addressed Writing rather than Listening, it reinforces the broader point that EFL learners form nuanced, evaluable perceptions of their engagement with TOEFL/IELTS-related coursework rather than experiencing it as a uniform, neutral activity.

Taken together, these five studies can be positioned relative to the present study in terms of both similarity and gap. Zaini (2024) shares this study's basic design logic of using perception as a predictor of readiness, but its focus on the Merdeka Curriculum means it is not EFL-specific and has no connection to TOEFL, IELTS, or listening skill. Livingston (2023) establishes teaching readiness as a multidimensional, context-sensitive construct that forms the theoretical basis for Variable Y in this study, yet it remains general teacher-education literature with no reference to EFL, listening, or standardized test preparation. Kang, Miao, Hirschi, and Ahn (2025) is the study most directly aligned with this research in subject matter, as it examines perception of IELTS Listening as a distinct, measurable construct; however, it studies general test-takers rather than pre-service teachers and does not link its findings to teaching readiness. Mir (2022) illustrates the same cognitive and evaluative response that test-takers form toward a TOEFL/IELTS-type test component, but its focus on Speaking rather than Listening, and on general test-takers rather than pre-service teachers, limits its direct applicability. Khidirov and Lee (2025) similarly shows that EFL learners form nuanced, evaluable perceptions of their engagement with IELTS-related coursework, yet its focus on Writing rather than Listening, and its

absence of any teaching-readiness measure, leaves an unaddressed gap that the present study is positioned to fill.

Looking across all three thematic areas, a consistent pattern emerges: perception is a well-established predictor of professional readiness in general teacher education contexts; teaching readiness among pre-service EFL teachers is a growing but still unevenly explored area, particularly in Indonesia; and while a small number of studies have begun to examine perceptions of TOEFL and IELTS Listening specifically (Kang et al., 2025), this line of research remains concentrated on general test-takers rather than pre-service teachers, leaving the link to teaching readiness comparatively underexamined. What remains absent is a study that brings these three threads together: one that examines how pre-service EFL teachers perceive a Listening-focused TOEFL/IELTS preparation course, and how that perception relates to their teaching readiness, using a quantitative framework grounded in teacher cognition (Borg, 2003), self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), and pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986).

2.5 Research Framework

Based on the review of related studies presented above, three distinct but interconnected gaps in the existing literature can be identified.

A. Thematic Gap

No existing study has explicitly examined pre-service EFL teachers' perception of a Listening-focused TOEFL/IELTS preparation course as an independent variable and directly investigated its relationship to teaching readiness within a single integrated conceptual framework. The closest existing work Kang et al. (2025) on perceptions of IELTS Listening, and Zaini (2024) on perception and teacher readiness operates on parallel tracks that never converge. Kang et al. (2025) does not involve pre-service teachers or link findings to teaching readiness; Zaini (2024) does not address EFL, listening, or standardized test preparation. This thematic gap matters because TOEFL and IELTS listening preparation is increasingly embedded in Indonesian EFL teacher education curricula, yet no research has directly investigated how perceptions of this specific coursework relate to future teachers' readiness to teach listening.

B. Methodological Gap

There is currently no quantitative study that uses a validated, multidimensional instrument to measure pre-service EFL teachers' perceptions of a Listening to TOEFL and IELTS course specifically covering relevance, difficulty, and professional value and tests the relationship between those perceptions and teaching readiness in a statistically robust way. Studies that engage directly with TOEFL/IELTS perception (Kang et al., 2025; Mir, 2022; Khidirov & Lee, 2025) have used qualitative, mixed-methods, or survey designs focused on general test-takers, not on an instrument developed specifically for pre-service teacher populations. This study addresses that gap by designing a multidimensional questionnaire grounded in the theoretical frameworks noted above and analysing the data using appropriate correlational statistical methods.

C. Contextual Gap

No study to date has examined the relationship between pre-service EFL teachers' perceptions of a Listening to TOEFL and IELTS course and their teaching readiness in an Indonesian university context, particularly not in a non-metropolitan setting such as Bengkulu. Zaini (2024) worked in an Indonesian educational context but did not focus on EFL, listening, or TOEFL/IELTS specifically; the listening-perception studies reviewed above (Kang et al., 2025; Mir, 2022; Khidirov & Lee, 2025) were conducted in different national contexts general international test-takers, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan respectively and did not address Indonesian pre-service teacher education. This contextual gap has practical significance: Indonesian national education policy increasingly incorporates English proficiency standards, including TOEFL and IELTS preparation, into teacher education curricula, yet empirical research on how Indonesian pre-service English teachers actually experience and respond to this coursework remains very limited.

D. Summary: Where This Study Sits

The three gaps outlined above thematic, methodological, and contextual converge on a single research space that has not yet been occupied: a quantitative, theoretically integrated study of how pre-service EFL teachers' perceptions of a

Listening to TOEFL and IELTS course relate to their teaching readiness, conducted in an Indonesian university setting. By filling this space, the present study contributes to the literature in several ways: it extends the application of teacher cognition theory to a specific and increasingly common component of EFL teacher preparation; it produces empirical data on a population pre-service EFL teachers in non-metropolitan Indonesia that is underrepresented in the research; and it provides a basis for evidence-informed recommendations about how listening-focused TOEFL/IELTS coursework can be more thoughtfully embedded within EFL teacher education programs.

2.6 Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses of this study state that there are significant relationships between pre-service EFL teachers' perception of TOEFL Listening (X1), perception of IELTS Listening (X2), and perceived impact on teaching readiness (X3), respectively, and their teaching readiness (Y). The null hypotheses state that these relationships are not significant.