

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides a detailed description of the research methodology used in conducting the research. The chapter elaborates on the context of the research, the purpose of the study and research questions, the research design, and the role of the researcher. Next, the data collection technique is described along with the research timeline to give a clear picture of how the overall research was conducted. Finally, the data analysis is identified followed by a concluding remark.

3.1 Research Context

The present study is part of a bigger research project entitled *Developing a Language Proficiency Test Instrument for Primary English Language Teachers*. The test instrument is named *Test for Primary English Language Teachers* (TPELT). TPELT is an online proficiency test platform dedicated to measuring the level of proficiency for primary English language teachers in Indonesia. The TPELT test platform can be accessed at <https://tpelt-upi.com/>.

TPELT is specifically tailored to test primary English language teachers in Indonesia and aims to provide a well-rounded understanding of the language proficiency of primary English language teachers in Indonesia. One prominent feature of TPELT that differentiates it from other existing proficiency tests is its topic-based content targeting the English language used for instructional purposes. In other words, compared to other existing proficiency tests, TPELT consists of topics surrounding classroom activities, tasks, and languages that will be taken by primary English language teachers in Indonesia. Furthermore, TPELT is categorized as an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) proficiency test because the test platform focuses on assessing primary English teachers' proficiency level in using English for instructional purposes.

TPELT assesses teachers' language skills of Listening, Reading-Viewing, Speaking, and Writing-Presenting. The Listening Skills section consists of 30

questions assessing teachers' proficiency in understanding monologues and dialogues, both expressed and implicit. The Reading-Viewing Skills section consists of 25 questions aiming to test teachers' proficiency in understanding written and visual passages. The Speaking Skills section has five questions focusing on teachers' proficiency in unidirectional spoken productions. The Writing Skills section has two questions focusing on teachers' proficiency in producing written texts in different text types.

As a multiyear research project, this study focuses on the first-year development of TPELT. In its first year, to develop the language proficiency test instrument, constructing an assessment framework was a significant task to perform as one of the initial stages of the bigger study. Therefore, the purpose of the present study is to construct a language proficiency assessment framework for primary English language teachers in Indonesia. In particular, the study examined the ways CEFR and *Kurikulum Merdeka* can help to construct the language proficiency assessment framework to develop TPELT. Furthermore, both CEFR and *Kurikulum Merdeka* combine communicative tasks in determining language proficiency.

The bigger research was conducted for 8 (eight) months consisting of 3 (three) prominent phases. It employed a generic cycle for Educational Design Research (EDR) developed by McKenney and Reeves (2012), according to each goal of the bigger research phases as shown in Figure 3.1. As part of a bigger research project, this study took place in the second phase.

Figure 3. 1
Research Phases of the TPELT Development

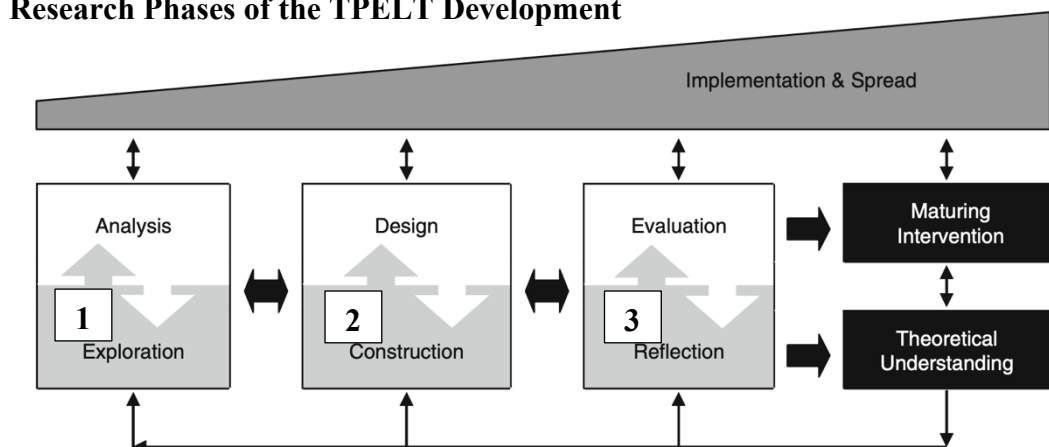


Figure 3.1 shows that the development of TPELT advanced through three primary phases. Phase 1 aimed to map and categorize teachers' proficiency levels, Phase 2 aimed to construct the proficiency test framework, and Phase 3 aimed to develop the test instrument.

The timeline of the bigger research phases is presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3. 1 TPELT Development Phases

	Phases	Stages	Research Timeline
1	Analysis and Exploration	Mapping and categorizing teachers' proficiency levels using PTESOL (TOEFL-like test assessing Listening, Reading, and Structure and Written Expression skills) and BETIC (assessing Speaking and Writing skills).	April 2022 – June 2022
2	Design	Identifying aspects of language proficiency from CEFR for teachers.	June 2022
		Identifying learning outcomes from Phase A – Phase C in Kurikulum Merdeka.	July 2022
		Sorting out the aspects of language proficiency from Communicative Language Activities and Strategies in CEFR that were relevant for teachers.	
	Justifying learning outcomes in <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> with the sorted scales from CEFR.		
	Construction	Constructing the language proficiency test framework.	July 2022 – August 2022
3	Evaluation and Reflection	Developing the blueprint into test items.	July 2022 – August 2022
		Developing test instrument of TPELT.	August 2022 – September 2022
		Conducting tests to participants.	October 2022
		Conducting validity and reliability tests.	October 2022 – November 2022

This present study focused on conducting Phase 2, highlighted in yellow. Phase 2, which consisted of stages 2 – 6, suggested the process of employing and identifying CEFR and *Kurikulum Merdeka* in constructing the language proficiency test framework.

Performing tasks in stages 2 – 6 in the EDR cycle to develop TPELT supported my role as a researcher in this phase as a framework constructor to identify, analyze, and construct the proficiency test framework and they allowed me to immerse myself to better understand CEFR and *Kurikulum Merdeka*. The third step of the EDR cycle was not involved in the present study because it was relevant for the final step of the bigger project in developing the test instrument.

Overall, the use of the Design and Construction steps in EDR in this study was valuable in informing the relevant aspects of CEFR and *Kurikulum Merdeka* in constructing a language proficiency test framework dedicated to primary English language teachers in Indonesia.

3.2 Sources of Data

It is central to describe key elements involved in this study that contribute to the overall understanding of the research topic. This section serves as a foundation to comprehend CEFR and *Kurikulum Merdeka* as the primary sources of data.

3.2.1 Common European Framework of Reference

The first primary source of data employed in this study was the descriptors in the CEFR Companion Volume published in 2020. The reason for employing the 2020 Companion Volume was because the companion presented updated scales and descriptors to describe language proficiency, including proficiency in language classrooms. As has been pointed out in Chapter II, the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) provides a comprehensive framework for language learners to develop the necessary linguistic skills required for effective communication and engagement in various social and cultural contexts (Council of Europe, 2001).

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) categorizes language learners' proficiency levels into 3 (three) major categories: Basic Users (A1 – A2), Independent Users (B1 – B2), and Proficient Users (C1 – C2). Of particular relevance to the present study reported on in this thesis, the levels being included in the construction of the test framework were from levels A2 to B1. The selection of levels A2 – B1 was based on the discussion among the research team members. Since this is part of a multiyear research project, thus, this particular study was conducted in the first-year development phase of TPELT, and it included levels A2 – B1 of CEFR in the test framework. Therefore, it is expected to go further levels in the subsequent year of the research.

As one of the established language framework references, CEFR suggests that language classrooms should incorporate communicative language activities and communicative language strategies (Council of Europe, 2020) in measuring language proficiency. With the communicative language activities and strategies, CEFR categorizes its communicative practice into four modes of communication, namely Reception, Production, Interaction, and Mediation.

This study, however, focused on the Reception and Production (later referred to as Receptive and Productive skills) modes since the two modes consist of spoken and written four language skills (Council of Europe, 2018) in addition to incorporating multimodal literacy skills informed in *Kurikulum Merdeka*: Viewing and Presenting skills. Also, the study did not include Interaction and Mediation because the TPELT test platform does not measure primary English teachers' two-way interaction with examiners and does not include collaborative tasks and convey meaning between teachers and someone else in communication and language barriers (Jeon, 2022).

The incorporation of Communicative Language Activities and Strategies into the TPELT test platform was suitable for the tasks performed in the language classroom (Council of Europe, 2020). Moreover, the scales in the Communicative Language Activities and Strategies focused on the use of genres in determining language users' proficiency levels, in this case, it is teachers.

The Communicative Language Activities and Strategies in CEFR are categorized into four modes of communication, namely Reception, Production, Interaction, and Mediation. As has been informed earlier, the test framework for the TPELT test platform focused on the Reception and Production scales. Table 3.2 shows the Reception and Production scales alongside their descriptors relevant to constructing a language proficiency test framework for teachers in this research.

Table 3. 2 Reception and Production Scales with the Descriptors (Adapted from Council of Europe, 2020)

No	Receptive Scales		Productive Scales		
	Activities	Strategies	Activities		
1	Overall Oral Comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding conversation between other people • Understanding as a member of a live audience • Understanding announcements and instructions • Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying cues and inferring (spoken, signed, and written) 	Overall Oral Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained monologue: describing experience • Sustained monologue: giving information • Sustained monologue: Putting a case (e.g., in a debate) • Addressing audiences
2	Overall Reading Comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading correspondence • Reading for orientation • Reading for information and argument • Reading instructions • Reading as a leisure activity 		Overall Written Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative writing • Reports and Essays

Table 3.2 shows the filtered and sorted scales of the Receptive and Productive used in constructing the test framework. Not all scales were integrated into the test framework as they were not relevant for measuring primary English language teachers' proficiency levels. Moreover, the descriptors adapted from the CEFR in Table 3.2 support the genre-pedagogy teaching approach that is significant in *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Therefore, the scales and descriptors in Table 3.2 are relevant to the English learning situation in primary schools. The scales and descriptors in Table 3.2 were then expanded into relevant Can-Do statements.

In the Productive scales, the Production Strategies descriptors were not incorporated because, based on the discussion with the bigger research team members, the TPELT test platform does not have the feature of measuring the processes involved in speaking and writing activities. Therefore, the TPELT test platform only measures teachers' spoken and written products. The test duration allocation also limited the test platform to measure the productive skills processes.

It should be acknowledged that, however, in both productive scales, preparing to speak and write is not an easy thing to do as it requires sufficient time to understand the message heard or read prior to talking or composing coherently and cohesively (Aunurrahman et al., 2017; Uysal, 2010; Zahra et al., 2021). More comprehensive data is presented in the Data Collection Technique section.

3.2.2 *Kurikulum Merdeka*

The second data used as the primary focus of this research was *Kurikulum Merdeka*. As has been pointed out, *Kurikulum Merdeka* now incorporates the English subject in primary schools and adapts CEFR as its proficiency equivalence. Moreover, *Kurikulum Merdeka* is influenced by a functional model of language proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1985) as well as genre-based pedagogy developed by Martin (1984). These approaches have been included in the curriculum since 2004. The objectives of English language instruction, as outlined in a policy paper (Kemdikbud, 2003), acknowledge Halliday's three metafunctions in relation to the instruction of the four language skills in the following manner:

- a. The acquisition of listening and reading skills enables individuals to *comprehend* ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings across many genres and types of texts, and
- b. Proficiency in speaking and writing abilities allows individuals to effectively *convey* the aforementioned metafunctions.

Kurikulum Merdeka emphasizes the enhancement of students' English language proficiency by exposing them to various text types by integrating six language skills: Listening, Reading, Viewing (receptive skills), Speaking, Writing, and Presenting (productive skills). The two additional viewing and representing skills demand students and teachers to be proficient at multimodality. Moreover, *Kurikulum Merdeka* integrates learning phases that took over the Core and Basic Competencies from the previous curriculum (2013 Kurikulum). In relation to the present study, I included the learning phases of Phase A – Phase C in the test framework. In other words, the learning phases are for primary school and junior

high school teachers as the focus of the study. In relation to the present study, the expected learning outcomes from *Kurikulum Merdeka* are presented in Table 3.3.

Table 3. 3 Learning Phases for English Language Curriculum (*Kepala Badan Standar, Kurikulum, dan Asesmen Pendidikan Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, 2022*)

No	Phases	Focus	Grades
1	Phase A	This general English is focused on introducing the English language and developing oral proficiency.	Grades 1-2
2	Phase B	This phase starts to focus on the oral English language but begins with the introduction of written language. In this phase, teachers begin assisting students in that oral and written English languages are distinct in nature.	Grades 3-4
3	Phase C	Phase C concentrates on oral and written English language competencies.	Grades 5-6

Aligning with the communicative language activities and strategies in CEFR, the language elements from *Kurikulum Merdeka* in this study also centered on communicative tasks and products to measure the language proficiency of primary English language teachers. Therefore, to support the main objective of this study, the exploration of the relevant communicative language activities and strategies in Receptive and Productive skills for primary English language teachers was undertaken. In other words, the inclusion of communicative language activities and strategies is suitable for measuring teachers' language proficiency for instructional purposes in the classrooms.

3.3 Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of the present study is to construct a language proficiency assessment framework for primary English language teachers in Indonesia. In particular, the study examined the ways CEFR and *Kurikulum Merdeka* can help to construct the language proficiency assessment framework to develop TPELT. Furthermore, both CEFR and *Kurikulum Merdeka* combine communicative tasks in determining language proficiency. Therefore, the study is overarched by the following research question:

How can CEFR and *Kurikulum Merdeka* help to construct a language proficiency assessment framework for primary English language teachers?

This research question is explored through two sub-questions:

- a) What aspects of CEFR are relevant to constructing a language proficiency test framework for primary English language teachers in Indonesia?
- b) What aspects of *Kurikulum Merdeka* are relevant to constructing a language proficiency test framework for primary English language teachers in Indonesia?

3.4 Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative approach because it was deemed appropriate to comprehensively figure out research findings from the present study's inquiries that were expressed through text forms (Burns, 2005; Creswell, 2018; Stake, 2005; Yin, 2009). Specifically, Educational Design Research (EDR) was utilized as the method of the study. The utilization of EDR in this study allowed me as the researcher to employ the research cycle (Figure 3.1) from EDR to gain an in-depth identification and development (Malik & Hamied, 2017; McKenney & Reeves, 2012; 2014) of relevant communicative language activities and strategies in the Receptive and Productive skills that underlay the construction of a language proficiency assessment framework for primary English language teachers in Indonesia.

3.5 Data Collection and Analysis Techniques

As shown in the research phases in Figure 3.1, this study focused on constructing a language proficiency test framework for primary English language teachers from two documents, they were the 2020 Companion Volume of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and learning phase outcomes in the English subject in *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Table 3.4 presents the Design and Construction phases followed by an elaboration on each stage.

Table 3. 4 Elaboration on Design and Construction Phases

Phase	Stages	Research Timeline	Remarks	
2	Design	Identifying aspects of language proficiency	June 2022	All research team members identified and analyzed aspects of language proficiency from CEFR that

	from CEFR for teachers.		were related to measuring teachers' language proficiency. Finding: Incorporating <i>Communicative Language Activities</i> and <i>Strategies</i> scales into the test framework. Deciding on using levels A2 – B1 in the framework.
	Identifying learning outcomes from Phase A – Phase C in Kurikulum Merdeka.		All research team members identified the learning outcomes from Phase A – Phase C to categorize what teachers should teach in the classroom. Finding: Adjusting each learning outcome of the respective skills to suit teachers' test framework.
	Sorting out the aspects of language proficiency from Communicative Language Activities and Strategies in CEFR that were relevant for teachers.	July 2022	Filtering the scales and descriptors that were relevant to measure teachers' language proficiency that would be developed for the test instrument. Finding: Not all scales and descriptors were integrated to measure teachers' proficiency.
	Justifying learning outcomes in <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> with the sorted scales from CEFR.		After filtering the scales in CEFR that were relevant to measure teachers' proficiency, the learning outcomes in <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> were justified with the CEFR scales.
Construction	Constructing the language proficiency test framework.	July 2022 – August 2022	The language test framework was constructed by incorporating the <i>Communicative Language Activities</i> and <i>Strategies</i> from CEFR and matched with the learning outcomes from <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> .

Stage 1: I worked collaboratively with the rest of the research team members in identifying aspects of language proficiency that were relevant to language classrooms. There are many language proficiency descriptor scales in CEFR, but the ones appropriate for measuring primary English language teachers' language proficiency levels were the Communicative Language Activities and Strategies. These scales are also aligned with the learning phases stated in Kurikulum Merdeka, focusing on language competency tasks and genre pedagogy. Therefore, the scales in Communicative Language Activities and Strategies were selected as the basis for the framework construction.

Stage 2: Another collaboration between the rest of the research team members and I was in identifying the learning outcomes from Phase A to Phase C in *Kurikulum Merdeka* that would suit the teachers' needs. The learning outcomes in *Kurikulum Merdeka* are specifically for students and combined for Listening and Speaking skills, therefore, an adjustment had to be conducted to separate so them so that it would suit teachers' needs and the expected skill outcomes.

Figure 3.2 shows the original Listening and Speaking learning outcomes in Phase C from Kurikulum Merdeka. The blue underline refers to the Speaking activities. Meanwhile, the orange underline refers to the Listening activities. The blue underlines for Speaking skills were altered to suit Listening skills activities and communicative purposes. Therefore, the words “*students use English to interact...*” were changed to “*teachers understand English through the interactions...*”

In Figure 3.2, the words “*They change/substitute some elements of sentences...*” were changed to “*They identify changes/substitutions of some elements of sentences...*” The words “*understand*” and “*identify*” were suited better to Listening skills proficiency. The orange underline remained the same because it already depicts the Listening skills. In relation to the Speaking skills framework, the learning outcomes represented by the blue underlines remained the same and the orange underline was left out. In Figure 3.2, there are some interaction activities that require two-way communication between two people, thus, it was not included as previously mentioned.

Both blue and orange underlines provide the communicative competence that teachers should be able to do. Therefore, in both Listening and Speaking skills in Phase C, the communicative competencies that teachers should be proficient in dialogues using simple questions, requesting clarification, and seeking permission. The text genres involved in Phase C are Procedures, Narrative, Recount, and Descriptive. Figure 3.3 and Figure 3.4 present the altered and separated skills for the framework. The complete data is found in Appendices.

Figure 3. 2
Learning Outcomes for Listening and Speaking in Phase C (Kepala Badan Standar, Kurikulum, dan Asesmen Pendidikan Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, 2022)

Element of Listening-Speaking
At the end of Phase C, <u>students use English to interact in a range of predictable social and classroom situations using certain patterns of sentences. They change/substitute some elements of sentences to participate in learning activities such as asking simple questions, requesting clarification and seeking permission. They use some strategies to identify key information in most contexts such as asking a speaker to repeat or to speak slowly, or asking what a word means. They follow a series of simple instructions related to classroom procedures and learning activities.</u>

Figure 3. 3
The Adjusted Listening Skills Learning Outcomes

Elements for Listening Skills
Phase C: Teachers understand English through interactions in a range of predictable social and classroom situations using certain patterns of sentences. They identify changes/substitutions in some elements of sentences to participate in learning activities such as asking simple questions, requesting clarification, and seeking permission. Teachers use some strategies to identify key information in most contexts. They follow a series of simple instructions related to classroom procedures and learning activities.

Figure 3. 4
The Adjusted Speaking Skills Learning Outcomes

Elements for Speaking Skills
Phase C: Teachers use English to interact in a range of predictable social and classroom situations using certain patterns of sentences. They change/substitute some elements of sentences to participate in learning activities such as asking simple questions, requesting clarification, and seeking permission.

Stage 3: After gaining and analysing the data from the aspects of language proficiency in CEFR and the learning outcomes *Kurikulum Merdeka*, the next step I did was sorting out the relevant Communicative Language Activities and Strategies in CEFR for measuring primary English teachers' language proficiency level. The sortation was done to identify which descriptors were relevant for measuring teachers' proficiency levels and which ones were aligned with the

learning outcomes in *Kurikulum Merdeka*. One thing to pay attention to in sorting out the data was that the overall comprehensions and productions had always to be present. This is because it is a gentle reminder for test developers of a broad ability in each skill that covers the respective descriptors (Council of Europe, 2020; OECD, 2021). It is very important to note that *Overall comprehension* plays the role of the umbrella to all descriptors so that test developers can understand what fundamental proficiency they need to have in assessing teachers' language skills. The analysis result is shown in the Table 3.1 previously.

Stage 4: Then, the sorted and filtered results from Stage 3 were justified with the learning phase outcomes in *Kurikulum Merdeka*. The justification was conducted to align the scales with the communicative competence stated in *Kurikulum Merdeka* so that test developers can develop test items that are in line with both Can-Do statements in CEFR and learning phase outcomes in *Kurikulum Merdeka*.

For example, one of the communicative language activities in level B1 in listening comprehension measures teachers' proficiency in *Understanding conversation between other people*. The descriptor includes a Can-Do statement that pertains to the ability of teachers to comprehend oral conversation between other people nearby and teachers play the role of an overhearer. This activity is complex because "there is no element of accommodation to the listeners and because the speakers may have shared assumptions, experiences they refer to, and variants in usage" (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 49). Moreover, this activity does not regard teachers as an "addressee in the conversation, thus, have no right to ask for repetition or clarification" (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 49).

This Can-Do statement is aligned with the Phase C learning outcomes because it requires teachers to understand English through interactions that require them to become an outsider, and this became the test framework for all skills and levels that were conducted in **Stage 5**. The justification is presented in Table 3.5.

Table 3. 5 Level B1 Justification in Understanding conversation between other people Activity with Kurikulum Merdeka

CEFR Level	Overall Comprehension	Can-Do Statement	Learning Outcome Phase from <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i>
B1	<p>Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or job-related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided people articulate clearly in a generally familiar variety.</p> <p>Can understand the main points made in clear standard language or a familiar variety on familiar matters regularly encountered at work, school, leisure, etc., including short narratives.</p>	<p>Can follow much of everyday conversation and discussion, provided it is clearly articulated in standard language or in a familiar variety.</p> <p>Can generally follow the main points of extended discussion around them, provided it is clearly articulated in standard language or a familiar variety.</p>	<p>Phase C: Teachers understand English through interactions in a range of predictable social and classroom situations using certain patterns of sentences.</p> <p>They identify changes/substitutions in some elements of sentences to participate in learning activities such as asking simple questions, requesting clarification, and seeking permission.</p> <p>Teachers use some strategies to identify key information in most contexts. They follow a series of simple instructions related to classroom procedures and learning activities.</p>

Stage 5: After justifying the CEFR scales and descriptors with the learning outcome phases from *Kurikulum Merdeka*, the test framework was constructed. The framework would be started from the Receptive skills consisting of Listening and Reading-Viewing skills. Meanwhile, the Productive skills framework consisting of Speaking and Writing-Presenting came afterward. Following the framework construction, in Chapter IV, an exploration of the findings to answer the overarching question and sub-questions is presented.

3.6 Concluding Remark

To conclude, this chapter has provided an overview of how Educational Design Research (EDR) and qualitative approaches were chosen to investigate the research questions of the study. A detailed description of the research context and source of data was presented. As part of a bigger research project, this study has explained my role as a researcher in a bigger research team in doing the second phase of the overall research project. The data collection and analysis were put forward to give a clear depiction of how the framework construction stages were performed. The next chapter will delineate how CEFR and *Kurikulum Merdeka* can

help to construct a language proficiency assessment framework and the relevant communicative language activities and strategies in the receptive and productive skills for measuring the language proficiency of primary English language teachers in Indonesia.