

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background of the study, identification of the problem, research questions, purpose of the study, significant of the study, and definition of key terms. All of these sub-chapters are discussed in the preliminary study and are explained as follows:

1.1 Background of the Study

In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language at school. English has been taught and used as a foreign language in Indonesia for sixty-five years (Marlina, 2012). This language is introduced to young learners from elementary school so that they quickly understand how to use English. The more fluent we are in language, the more impact it will have on our future. Especially in this era, there are many jobs that require someone to be fluent in English.

English is very practicable and well taught at the elementary school level. According to Oktavia et al (2022) young learners aged between five and twelve years are very good at learning languages because they are active learners and thinkers. Young learners tend to express their opinions more often in class whether it is right or wrong. They are also very active in asking questions about things they do not understand and this shows that young learners are very active. Teaching English to young learners is quite challenging. Teachers must understand the characteristics of the students they teach so that teaching and learning activities run

well. Because young learner are active learners who like to learn by doing (Oktavia et al., 2022). That is why teacher creativity must be considered. Teachers should design creative and dynamic activity to facilitate students' active learning.

According to Hardi & Rizal (2020) Young learners are divided into two groups, namely the young group ranging from 6 to 8 years old, and the older group ranging from 9 to 12 years old. In elementary school, young learners are divided into six different levels, namely grade one through grade six. Usually, students at this age can also be called beginners if they just start learning English at that age. (Hardi & Rizal, 2020).

Every school certainly uses the curriculum as a reference for education. One of the schools that uses the curriculum is a state school. One of the curricula used is the Merdeka Curriculum. Merdeka curriculum is an emergency curriculum implemented during the pandemic. According to Oktavia et al (2022) This curriculum has been implemented since the 2021/2022 school year with the aim of perfecting the previous curriculum, namely the 2013 curriculum. There are three policies in implementing Merdeka Curriculum namely: schools do not conduct national exams, simplifying the Learning Implementation Plan, and the last is the regulations for implementing new student admissions should be rearranged (Daga, 2018). The words “Merdeka” in Merdeka Curriculum aligns with Ki Hajar Dewantara's principles, which emphasize free learning to enable students to develop independently and creatively (Ardianti & Amalia, 2022).

According to Rahim & Khatimah (2023) Project-based learning is one of the characteristics of the Merdeka Curriculum. Project-Based Learning is learning that focuses on students by involving students in solving a problem with a product as

the final result (Widiyati & Pangesti, 2022). According to Kimsesiz (2017) Project-Based Learning as a learning method requires students to be more active so teachers can focus on providing direction and assessing students. Therefore, students' activities at school are not only reading books, but students will also work together with their friends in carrying out a project and to develop their thinking skills in solving a problem.

Project-Based Learning can encourage students' behavioural outcomes, cognitive outcomes, affective outcomes, and artifact performance outcomes (Guo et al., 2020). Project-Based Learning has been proven by research that this learning can significantly increase student involvement in the English language learning process by exchanging information and knowledge from discussions to obtain a final solution (Almulla, 2020). Project-Based Learning emphasizes learning on activities carried out by students and problem-solving learning carried out, then the knowledge gained by students will be applied to produce authentic project results.

Project-Based Learning will provide an interesting and meaningful learning experience for the students. According to Rozal et al (2021) this learning model will help students improve their ability to solve problems and can develop students' self-confidence. This learning model can also familiarize students with critical thinking. The PJBL learning model, when applied, can improve students' critical thinking because the application of this model can encourage creativity, questioning skills, independence, a sense of responsibility, self-confidence, and thinking skills (Winarti et al., 2022). Kurniadi (2023) also added that implementing Project-Based Learning can integrate academic learning into daily activities and can increase student enthusiasm when placed in group projects. There are several steps in

implementing PjBL. According to Fahlevi (2022) syntax for implementing Project-Based Learning is: 1) Start with the Essential Question, 2) Design a Plan for the Project, 3) Create a Schedule, 4) Monitor the Students and the Progress of the Project, 5) Assess the Outcome, 6) Evaluate the Experience.

In English classes at public elementary schools in Bali, there are still elementary schools that have English teachers who do not have English qualifications. Research conducted by Utami (2022) conducted research on four teachers who did not have an English language education background at an elementary school in Bali, and the results showed that teachers at the school faced challenges in teaching English due to their less relevant qualifications. The challenges that the teachers encountered were the difficulty in providing teaching materials using English fluently. Teachers also had difficulty in creating learning designs that attracted students' attention using teaching media, as well as difficulties in using student-centered activities. This causes teachers who do not have the appropriate educational qualifications to not be able to teach English ideally.

Another research conducted by Virgianti et al (2020) on the implementation of teacher learning strategies in Buleleng Regency in teaching English to young students. This research shows a low category, and this identifies that the teacher is unable to design creative and innovative learning activities and prepare interesting learning media. Similar findings were also found by Dewi et al (2020) regarding the implementation of learning strategies in teaching young learners in Gianyar Regency, shows that teachers have low implementation of creative and innovative learning strategies and more often use student worksheets as learning media.

In addition, most English teachers in elementary schools do not have the special qualifications needed to teach young English language students as a result they will use conventional and monotonous teaching methods (Listyariani et al., 2018).

According to Utami (2022), a teacher's educational background plays an important role in his development as an expert in the field he teaches. Hence, teachers with primary school graduate educational backgrounds for young learners do not have adequate skills in teaching English. Teachers who do not have a formal educational background in English will grab lesson plans directly from the internet and they do not adjust the lesson plan to the needs of students (Utami, 2022). Teachers who teach English without formal English education are teachers with a primary school education background and this fact is proven by Sofian Hadi & Izzah (2018) who stated that in primary school, the teacher who do not have formal education background in English will certainly have lack of pedagogical skills in English. Therefore, according to Widiyati & Pangesti (2022) there are still many teachers who teach English using conventional methods which cause a lack of interaction and communication between students and teachers so they only focus on understanding grammar and reading comprehension. This makes teachers less innovative and creative in teaching English.

Ernawati (2022) said that an innovative learning model is a learning approach that uses new, creative methods and prioritizes critical thinking, involvement and active participation of students in the learning process. One of the innovative learning models that can be applied is the project-based learning model. This learning model aims to develop students' ability to think independently, creatively

and innovatively so that they can generate new ideas, solve problems and apply knowledge in real life.

In English subjects at elementary school level, learning using the Project-Based Learning method is still rarely used in learning activity. This is because there are many preparations that must be made by teachers, starting from sufficient time for students to complete the product so that the results are maximum, the need for skills between teachers and students, and supporting facilities that must be adequate (Martati, 2022). Apart from that, according to Novita et al (2022) there are still many teachers who use one-way learning methods which only focus on teachers who use lecture techniques, especially in learning English. This causes students to lack competency mastery and less involvement of their skills when learning.

There are still many schools that still use learning methods that only focus on teachers, namely using the lecture method, especially in English classes in elementary schools (Novita et al., 2022). This is because if you use the Project Based Learning method, many things must be prepared. According to (Martati, 2022), the things that need to be prepared when using the Project Based Learning method are the need for a long time to complete the project and get the best results, understanding of skills between teachers and students, and adequate supporting facilities.

The Project Based Learning method is also carried out in International Schools or can be said to be Private Schools and the results presented are good and positive. According to Ghimire et al (2020) Private school is superior to the public in terms of investing more time, efforts, and caretaking to the children, and, thus, produce better achievement score in comparison to public school through

surveillance system instead of professional development. As in Pelangi School Bali, which provides facilities that greatly support learning activities such as spacious classrooms, complete learning support facilities, a large library, and learning media that greatly assist the learning process of teachers and students at school. The existence of learning facilities is indeed very helpful in improving student learning outcomes (Frameiliada et al., 2023)

Pelangi School Bali is located in Gianyar Regency, Bali, and has become one of the private elementary schools in Gianyar. Established since 2006, this school uses the IPC (International Primary Curriculum) curriculum for grades one to five and the IMYC (International Middle Years Curriculum) curriculum for grade six. All learning activities in this school use English, such as mathematics, science, Balinese culture, and physical education. This IPC curriculum contains many themes with projects that will be worked on by students. This IPC curriculum certainly uses the Project Based Learning method where Project Based Learning is one of the methods used in the Merdeka Curriculum. Therefore, researchers focus on conducting research related to the implementation of Project Based Learning in grades 1 and 2 at Pelangi School Bali and this study also investigates the challenges faced by teachers in implementing Project Based Learning and the strategies used to overcome these challenges.

1.2 Identification of Problem

English teachers should be creative and innovative in design and preparing learning activities in the class. However, some English teachers who teach English in elementary school do not have sufficient education background for that. Many

teachers who teach English come from primary school teacher education so their knowledge about English language learning is inadequate.

Especially in Bali, English teachers in Bali mostly teach in traditional ways and even those who are not English graduates also teach English. These studies found that there was a lack of consistency between the teachers' perceptions and their implementation of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) in teaching English for young learners in Gianyar. Meanwhile in international schools, teacher perceptions and implementation are balanced. There may still be some difficulties faced, but teachers at international schools have thought about strategies that will be implemented when challenges occur. International schools are classified as making more efforts to provide adequate facilities to support the success of learning English in class (Utari, 2021; Dewi et al, 2020)

Previous studies have shown that there is a significant gap in research on the implementation of PjBL in Indonesian Education, especially in schools with varied curricula such as schools with national plus and international curricula with national schools. Research on the implementation of PjBL at Pelangi School Bali aims to fill this gap by providing more comprehensive learning on the implementation of PjBL for young learners in grades 1 and 2. By focusing on international schools that integrate IPC and international curricula, this study is expected to provide an understanding of how this learning method can be carried out effectively in a local context. This study also aims to see what challenges are faced during the implementation of PjBL and what strategies teachers use to overcome the challenges faced during the implementation of PjBL. This study is also expected to

provide practical recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the PjBL method in schools in Indonesia, especially in Bali.

1.3 Research Questions

Based on the problem identification above, the research questions for this study are formulated as follows:

- a. What is the implementation procedure of Project Based Learning at Pelangi School Bali?
- b. What are the challenges encountered by the teacher in implementing Project Based Learning at Pelangi School Bali?
- c. What are the strategies to cope with the challenges of implementing Project Based Learning at Pelangi School Bali?

1.4 Purpose of the Study

Based on the discussion of the problems above, the objectives of this study are formulated as follows:

1. To find out the implementation procedure of Project-based learning at Pelangi School Bali.
2. To find out the challenges encountered by the teacher in implementing Project Based Learning at Pelangi School Bali.
3. To find out the teacher strategies to cope with the challenges of implementing Project Based Learning at Pelangi School Bali.

1.5 Significance of the Study

1.5.1. Theoretical Significance

Researchers hope that this research can develop good practices in applying learning methods for young learners, and it is hoped that this research can contribute as a supporting source for further research. It is hoped that this research will increase the interest of other researchers in studying English language learning, especially English language learning for young learners.

1.5.2 Practical Significance

A. For Teachers

1. This study is expected to improve teachers' good performance when teaching so that teachers can be more innovative, creative and wise in choosing a teaching method.
2. This study is expected to help teachers increase relevant insight and knowledge regarding how to implement good project-based learning when teaching English.
3. This study is expected to contribute to improving teachers' abilities and skills when teaching English to young learners.

B. For Students

1. This study is expected to improve student achievement in English classes for the better.
2. This study is expected to increase students' learning motivation through the application of fun learning methods.

3. This study is expected to increase student activity during learning English.

C. For School

This study is expected to show that this research can serve as a guide for other schools in improving teacher competency, especially English teachers, and can select teaching methods that suit student character and student needs in teaching English so that teaching and learning activities are achieved optimally.

D. For Researchers

This study is expected to be used as a reference by other researchers in conducting further research.

1.6 Scope of the Research

The scope of this research is at a private school in Gianyar district. This school is called Pelangi School Bali. The research was conducted in two classes, namely grade 1 and grade 2. There were 15 students in grade 1 and 23 students in grade 2. Research was also conducted on two teachers in each class to see how teachers implemented Project-Based Learning in the classroom and to see the challenges teachers faced in implementing project-based learning along with the strategies used by teachers to overcome these challenges.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

The following key terms used in this study are defined to avoid any misunderstanding on the part of the reader.

1.8.1. Conceptual Definition

a. Young Learner

According to Cambridge English, young learners are children who start learning in the first six years of formal education, generally aged 6 to 12 years (Cambridge Assessment, 2019). Young learners can also be classified by grade rather than by their age alone. Students in the lower grades or level one, consist of students in grades 1, 2, and 3, while in the upper grades, or level two, consist of students in grades 4, 5, and 6 (Hardi & Rizal, 2020). Young learners have certain characteristics such as a high sense of interest and curiosity towards something, active and like to learn by doing, not yet able to think abstractly but skilled at imitating or modeling, able to learn in an indirect way, talkative and creative with limited vocabulary and grammar, and have a short attention span, such as when playing and learning (Scott & Ytreberg, 1995.)

b. Project Based Learning

According to Widiyati & Pangesti (2022) Project-Based Learning is a method with students as the center of the teaching and students will be involved in problem-solving activities with products as the result. Kimsesiz et al., (2017) state that the most effective learning principle is

learning by doing, and project-based learning supports this. Learning by doing will give young learners the opportunity to explore the talents they have, besides learning by doing will prevent the boring learning process.

1.8.2. Operational Definition

- a. In this study, young learners at Pelangi School Bali are defined as children under 12 years old.
- b. Project-Based Learning is a method used by English teachers at Pelangi School Bali to teach English to young learners. The use of this method is expected to have a good impact on young learners' learning outcomes.

