CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In order to improve the quality of education in Indonesia, all kinds of schools must work together to create a better education system and process. This must start from the primary to higher education level, whether it is public, private, or international schools. In the context of primary school in Indonesia, many schools incorporate the "Tunas Muda" theory put forward by Ki Hadjar Dewantara in their educational practices (Harini et al., 2023). This theory prioritizes a learning approach that emphasizes children's freedom and activeness in the learning process. Elementary schools in Indonesia also emphasize character education, namely teaching moral values, social skills, and life skills that will help them become responsible individuals and contribute positively to society (Harini et al., 2023).

Each school uses a curriculum that has been created by the government. In recent years, the curriculum provided by the government has changed several times, starting with the Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP), K13, and the Merdeka curriculum. These curriculum changes also affect the position of English subjects in schools, especially in elementary schools. In some curricula, English at the elementary school level becomes compulsory local content. The local content of English for elementary schools is increasingly recognized by being mentioned in the 2006 KTSP. Based on Permendiknas Number 22 of 2006 concerning Content Standards and Permendiknas Number 23 of 2006 concerning Graduate Competency Standards, English is one of the compulsory local contents

for all elementary school students from grade, I to grade VI with the allocation of learning time provided is 2 x 35 minutes of learning hours per week. Drastic changes to the position of English local content in primary schools then occurred in 2012 when the government planned to replace the KTSP with the 2013 curriculum (Faridatuunnisa, 2020). Curriculum 2013 emphasizes an equal and learner-centred education model to be more involved in the learning process. This curriculum emphasizes the right to freedom of learning but still upholds religious values, culture and national diversity. Currently in 2022/2023 the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kemendikbud) officially implemented the Merdeka curriculum in schools in Indonesia. The Merdeka curriculum emphasizes the concept of "freedom to learn" to the implementers of learning, namely teachers and school principals in composing, implementing the learning process and developing the curriculum in schools paying attention to the needs and potential of students (Alimuddin, 2023). The Merdeka curriculum aims to develop soft skills and build the character of the Pancasila learner profile in students (Merdeka et al., 2023). The Pancasila Learner Profile strengthening program provides opportunities for students to learn in an informal atmosphere with flexible learning structures, more interactive learning activities, and direct interaction with the surrounding environment to improve various abilities in strengthening the Pancasila Learner Profile (Merdeka et al., 2023). There are six competencies that are formulated as key dimensions of the Pancasila Learner Profile, which include having faith, fear of God, and having noble character, global diversity, mutual cooperation, independence, critical thinking, and creativity (Kemendibud, 2021). These six competencies show that the Pancasila Learner Profile does not only focus on

cognitive abilities, but also attitudes and behaviours (Kemendibud, 2021). In developing students' character, project-based learning is considered important because it provides opportunities for students to learn through experience (Mujiburrahman et al., 2022). In addition, according to Sampurno in (Martati, 2022) PjBL can also maximize student activity in learning, increase creativity, critical thinking skills, and scientific performance. Therefore, the Merdeka curriculum strongly promotes PjBL in the learning process.

Project-based learning stresses learning through student activities and problem solving, after which students' knowledge is used to generate an authentic project outcome. The syntax for PjBL implementation is as follows: 1) starting with essential questions, 2) designing a plan for the project, 3) making a schedule, 4) monitoring students and project, 5) assess the outcome, 6) evaluate the experience (Fahlevi, 2022). The importance of learning through this PjBL method is that students will be schooled in skills and how to solve issues. Students will grow in their ability to think critically and strengthen their talents. PjBL may provide meaningful learning experiences for students and is undoubtedly more engaging. This will allow the teacher's function as a facilitator to be effectively performed. The Project-Based Learning paradigm is particularly effective in helping students gain self-confidence, increase problem-solving abilities, and acquaint students with high-level thinking skills (Fauzi et al., 2019). Project-Based Learning can link academic learning to everyday life. Project-based learning increased student passion and participation by putting them in group projects that had real-world applications (Kurniadi, 2023). Unfortunately, PjBL is still not extensively used in schools, particularly in English courses at the primary school level because when

implementing the Project-Based Learning method, teachers require a lot of equipment that must be prepared (Martati, 2022). Furthermore, many instructors still employ one-way learning approaches that are concentrated solely on the teacher with lecture tactics while teaching English (M. N. D. Lestari & Sutrisna, 2022). As a result, students are less likely to grasp competencies and engage their talents during studying.

At the level of pedagogical competence, it is found that teachers lack vocational skills and educational insights on how to teach foreign languages, especially English, to children (Setiyadi & Syahrial, 2022). These days, a lot of primary schools employ English teachers who do not have a formal academic background to teach English. This is reinforced by the results of research conducted by Setiyadi & Syahrial, (2022) who found that many kindergarten and primary school English teachers in Cimahi do not have a background in teacher education and English. Therefore, teachers lack understanding of learning theories, methods, techniques, and appropriate English media or learning resources (Setiyadi & Syahrial, 2022).

Teachers who do not have a professional English education background are often perplexed about what resources to teach and what approaches to employ while teaching English to young learners in elementary schools. In addition, these English teachers usually teach using readily available worksheets. Because of the teachers' lack of educational qualification in English education, they utilize lesson plans and syllabus that they downloaded off the internet rather than customizing them for the needs of the students (Utami, 2022). According to Utami, (2022), many teachers in primary schools in Bali have no English education qualification background.

Consequently, their English teaching practices are not pedagogically suitable with teaching English to young learners' principles. This is also supported by research findings of Listyariyani (2018) who found that most of the teachers particularly in public primary school at Jembrana, Bali who are responsible for teaching English in some primary schools do not seem to have specialised qualifications to teach English for young learners. However, when teaching young learners, teachers need to pay attention to their characteristics. Young learners have characteristics of being more energetic and enthusiastic compared to adolescent students, intending to please the educator, and enjoying being part of an activity even if they don't know what or how to do it (Ningsih, 2020). Furthermore, in elementary school teacher education, the English language learning obtained is monotonous, and learning resources solely focus on teacher explanations (Hadi & Izzah, 2019). Because of that, there is still a lack of suitable projects for learning English. Therefore, currently there are still many teachers teaching English to young learners using conventional methods, the use of this method results in the absence of much interaction and communication that occurs between teachers and students so that it will focus on reading comprehension and grammar (Widiyati & Pangesti, 2022a). Because of that they are less able to design innovative learning for young learners. As with teachers in Bali, there are still many teachers who have not been able to design appropriate and innovative activities for young learners. This can be seen from the results of research from Virgianti et al., (2020) which found that the implementation of teacher learning strategies in Buleleng Regency in teaching English to young learners showed a low category. This indicates that these teachers have not been able to design creative and innovative learning activities and prepare

interesting learning media (Virgianti et al., 2020). The results of this study are also reinforced by the findings of other studies that found similar things. According to the results of research conducted by Dewi et al., (2020) at primary school at Gianyar, the teachers often repeat the same strategies, such as reading and answering questions in the LKS book, doing repetition exercises, answering students' questions and also the teachers' lack of English language skills make students unsure and easily bored when learning in class.

Based on previous research, teachers in public primary schools still have obstacles in designing innovative learning. There are still many teachers in public primary schools who use conventional methods. However, in the context of private schools, there are innovations in English language learning for young learners. According to Pratiwi et al., (2021) in teaching English to young learners, teachers in private schools in Yogyakarta use cooperative strategies, focus students into groups to achieve learning objectives, connect learning materials with daily life, and teachers also use videos in teaching. In addition, according to Imtiaz Alam & Aamir Sohail Langraw (2022) most private primary school teachers use appropriate strategies in teaching their students, the teachers explain by demonstrating and giving examples during teaching, they also provide time for practice, they make students work with concrete materials (graphs, maps, diagrams, pictures), and most respondent teachers encourage students to learn better.

Therefore, in this study, researchers used a private primary school instead of a public one. This is because private schools have a wider range of learning activities with innovative pedagogical approaches. Although private schools cost more than public schools, this is due to the facilities and activities offered by private

schools. According to Nurhandini & Salsabila (2024) private schools have more complete facilities and infrastructure because primary schools have substantial funding from several sources. Other studies also found out that private schools have more flexibility in their curriculum, which allows them to incorporate additional character-building activities and innovative pedagogical approaches (Suyanto, 2024). In addition, private schools also pay attention to the quality of teachers in teaching. Private schools tend to offer more specialized training opportunities for teachers to adopt a wider range of instructional strategies tailored to character education (Suyanto, 2024). This is reinforced by the findings of Anatasya et al., (2023) that private schools are more flexible in offering a wide selection of activities, and still ensure that the activities meet academic standards and also have real benefits for student development.

The school used by the researcher is Pelangi School Bali. The researcher used Pelangi school because this school has adequate facilities for implementing PjBL. Pelangi School Bali also used an international curriculum namely International Primary Curriculum (IPC) and International Middle Years Curriculum (IMYC). IPC and IMYC use a thematic approach, where subjects are integrated into one big theme and the learning process uses projects. Besides that, almost half of the teachers at this school are native speakers. It makes the learning process the school uses English as the language of instruction. In addition, this school also has complete facilities, such as a large yard that can be used by students to observe nature and various project activities carried out by students. The researcher used grade 5 and 6 elementary school students at Pelangi School Bali in this study. This is because the researcher wanted to find out the students' readiness to go to junior

high school. At that level, English has become a compulsory subject in school. The adoption of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in private primary schools in Bali is the subject of this study.

The distinction between this research and the previous research is that this research focuses on the elementary school level. In addition, this research also explains about the implementation procedure of PjBL, challenges and strategies that teachers can use. While the previous research focused more on student learning outcomes in several learning subjects. In addition, previous research also did not explain in detail about the implementation procedure of PjBL. This is based on research conducted by Karyawati & Ashadi (2018); Kristianto & Harendita (2022); Babadjanova (2023) found that PjBL was proven effective for improving students' speaking and reading skills. Therefore, this research is important to find out the PjBL implementation procedure, challenges, and strategies.

1.2 Identification of Problem

As a teacher, it is important to be able to design appropriate and innovative activities. Unfortunately, in Bali there are still many teachers who have not been able to design appropriate and innovative activities for young learners. This can be seen from the results of the implementation of teacher learning strategies in Buleleng Regency in teaching English to young learners still falls into the low category which indicates that these teachers have not been able to design creative and innovative learning activities and prepare interesting learning media (Virgianti et al., 2020). This finding was corroborated by Dewi et al., (2020) and P. M. Dewi et al. (2020) who found that teachers in elementary schools in Gianyar district often

repeated the same strategies, such as reading and answering questions in the LKS book, doing exercise questions, answering students' questions and also the teacher's lack of English language skills made students become unconfident and easily bored when learning in class. Because of that it is important to use an effective learning approach.

The implementation of PjBL has proven to be effective in improving students' abilities. This is supported by the results of research conducted by Babadjanova (2023) who found out PjBL can help students develop their speaking skills because they correct and are corrected by their peers. Furthermore, PjBL has also proven effective for improving students' speaking and reading skills Karyawati & Ashadi (2018); Kristianto & Harendita (2022)). In addition to being effective in improving students' abilities, PjBL can also increase students' interest in learning. This is strengthened by Widiyati & Pangesti, (2022b) who found out that students' interest, inventiveness, and motivation to study English can be increased through project-based learning.

Based on some findings from previous research, it can be concluded that there are still many elementary school teachers in Bali who have not been able to design innovative and effective learning. One of the approaches that can be used is PjBL. Learning using PjBL has been proven to be effective in improving student abilities. However, previous studies focused more on student learning outcomes in certain abilities. How the implementation of PjBL is carried out in the field is still not described in detail. So are the challenges and strategies that can be used. Therefore, this research is important to provide an overview of the procedures for implementing PjBL and also the challenges that can be faced when implementing

this approach. In addition, this research also covers strategies that can be used by teachers. So that teachers can have an overview and be motivated to implement PjBL well.

1.3 Research Questions

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

1. How is the implementation procedure of Project-Based Learning in English Class grade 5 and 6 at Pelangi School Bali?

2. What are the challenges encountered by the teacher in implementing Project Based Learning?

3. What are the strategies to cope with the challenges of implementing Project Based Learning?

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 in English Class grade 5 and 6 at Pelangi School Bali.

2 To find out the challenges encountered by the teacher in implementing Project Based Learning.

3 To find out the strategies that teacher used to cope with the challenges of implementing Project Based Learning

1.5 Significance of the Study

1.5.1 Theoretical Significance

1. This study is expected to contribute as a supporting reference source for further research.

2. This study is expected to increase other researchers' interest in studying the field of English language learning, especially in teaching English to young learners.

3. This study is expected to develop good practices in the implementation of learning methods for young learners.

1.6 Practical Significance

1.6.1 For Teachers

1. This study is expected to add relevant insights and knowledge for teachers in how to implement project-based learning well in teaching English.

2. This study is expected to contribute to improving teachers' abilities and skills in teaching English, especially in teaching English to young learners.

3. This study is expected to increase the good performance of teachers in teaching to be more creative, innovative, and wise in choosing teaching methods.

1.6.2 For Students

1. This study is expected to increase students' learning motivation by implementing suitable and fun learning methods.

2. This study is expected to improve student learning achievement results in English classes for the better.

3. This study is expected to increase activity during the learning period and can maximize students' potential in learning English.

1.6.3 For School

This study is expected to be a guideline for other schools in improving teacher competence, especially English teachers, the importance of selecting teaching methods that suit the needs and characteristics of students, especially in teaching English, will create maximum learning outcomes.

1.6.4 For Researcher

This study is expected to contribute as a reference for other researchers in future research. In addition, the findings from this study can be used to conduct other research with themes related to this study.

1.7 Scope of the Research

The scope of this study is limited to investigating how teachers' procedures in implementing project-based learning as a method of teaching English for young learners, the challenges teachers face when implementing PjBL, and the strategies used by teachers. The researcher used students in grade 5 and grade 6 in Pelangi school. Pelangi school is a private primary school that used an international curriculum, namely International Primary Curriculum (IPC) and International Middle Years Curriculum (IMYC). In grade 5 there are 1 class teacher and 1 teacher assistant. While in grade 6 there is 1 teacher. There are 12 students in grade 6 and

13 students in grade 5. All of the teachers used in this research have an English education background.

1.8 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

1.8.1.1 Young Learner

According to Cambridge Assessment (2019), young learners are children in the first six years of formal education, aged 6 to 12 years. Young learners can also be classified into two groups: younger (6–8 years) and older (9–12 years (Vitri Angraini Hardi, 2020). Young learners, according to Scott & Ytreberg (1993) have characteristics such as being active and learning by doing, more attracted and curious about something, learn in an indirect way, incapable of abstract thought yet skilled at imitating or copying something, talking a lot and being creative with a limited vocabulary and grammar, understanding meaning and creating one's own imaginary world, having short attention spans, such as while playing and studying

1.8.1.2 Project Based Learning

According to Widiyati & Pangesti, (2022) Project-based learning (PjBL) is a student-centered teaching method by involving students in problem-solving experiences with a product as the final result. PjBL method allows learners to assess, interpret problems, and synthesize information to produce various forms of learning outcomes Suciani et al. (2018) states in Puspa Rineksiane (2022).

1.8.2 Operational Definition

1) In this study, the researcher used grade 5 as well as grade 6. Thus, young learners at Pelangi School Bali are defined as children aged 10 to 12 years old.

2) Especially at the level of Primary School, Pelangi School teachers used Project Based Learning as their method in teaching. The use of this method is expected to have a good impact on young learners' learning outcomes