

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the study's introduction, especially the study's background, problem identification, limitations, research question, research objectives, significance of the study, scope of the research, and definition of the key terms. Each of them will be explained as follows.

1.1 Background of the Study

A critical factor in human resource development is education. When attitudes, behaviour, insights, abilities, expertise and skills align with the demands of various fields and sectors, human resources become increasingly valuable. Through education, humans can learn everything that does not exist or has not existed. Every human being has the right to education. Everyone must have the right to education according to their opportunities, abilities and access (Gunawan, 2020). Therefore, it is clear how important education is in increasing human resources so that they are equal on a regional, national and world scale.

In Indonesia's education world, there are always changes in educational policies that are expected to bring the Republic of Indonesia towards better education. One of these changes is regarding English language learning. English has long been an integral part of the education system in Indonesia, and it was initially only given at the higher education level. Still, the need and popularity of English have increased over time, resulting in changes to the English language teaching curriculum. To improve students' ability and mastery of English, the

government finally introduced English language lessons at lower levels of education, namely at the basic education level.

To meet educational needs, the curriculum is updated regularly. This curriculum change was carried out at all levels of educational units, from elementary school to university level. Since the 2021/2022 academic year, the Minister of Education has issued a new policy regarding implementing the Merdeka curriculum, which replaces and perfects the previous curriculum, namely the 2013 curriculum. Several important things are emphasized in the Merdeka curriculum, especially the Merdeka curriculum in elementary school. One thing emphasized is that English is optional in elementary schools. This is, of course, a major concern for several elementary schools because many elementary schools do not have English teachers. In the previous curriculum, namely the 2013 curriculum, English was not included as one of the subjects in elementary schools. The status of English in elementary schools is one of the local content that is optional to be taught. Elementary schools can choose whether to teach English as local content or not.

In the world of education, many factors determine the success of learning. One of them is the teaching method. Choosing the proper English teaching method is the key to the success of the learning process. Effective and relevant learning methods can facilitate students' abilities (Tae et al., 2019). Therefore, teachers should pay attention to the needs and characteristics of students, especially early childhood students, when choosing teaching methods.

Even though they have great talent in language acquisition, young learners still require special attention because they differ from adult learners in several ways.

Young learners differ from adult learners in motivation, orientation, learning needs, and learning experiences (McDonough, 2013). Apart from that, young learners and adult learners also have different attention spans; young learners get bored more quickly than adult learners when learning. Therefore, teachers must be creative and innovative to teach young learners effectively. Young learners require special attention during the learning process, so teachers must know their unique characteristics (Oktaviani & Desiarti, 2019).

In primary school teacher education, English learning is monotonous, and learning resources only focus on teacher explanation (Hadi & Izzah, 2019). Learning materials for primary school teachers only concentrate on teacher explanation, and students usually receive repetitive English instructions. Therefore, when teaching English to young students, English teachers with an elementary school teacher education background lack solid pedagogical knowledge. Thus, currently, there are still many teachers who teach English to young learners using conventional methods. This method results in less interaction and communication between teachers and students, so the focus is only on reading comprehension and grammar (Widiyati & Pangesti, 2022).

To provide good education, a teacher must know the needs of his students and be able to choose appropriate learning methods. Based on the explanation above, one effective method that can be used to teach English to young students is to use Project Based Learning. Project-based learning as a learning method requires students to be more active so that the teacher's job is only to provide direction and assess students (KİMSESİZ, 2017). According to Sampurno in Martati (2022), Project-based Learning can maximize student activity in learning, as well as

increase creativity, critical thinking skills, and scientific performance. Students' scientific performance also improves and encourages students to develop long-term learning skills. Project Based Learning has great potential to create a more interesting and meaningful learning experience and can improve students' scientific performance in learning so that, at the same time, the teacher's role as a facilitator and mediator can be appropriately fulfilled (Martati, 2022). Project-based learning emphasizes learning through student activities and problem-solving, after which student knowledge is used to produce authentic project outcomes. The syntax for PjBL implementation is as follows: 1) starting with important questions, 2) designing a plan for the project, 3) creating a schedule, 4) monitoring students and projects, 5) assessing results, 6) evaluating the experience (Fahlevi, 2022)

The application of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) learning method in teaching English has become a topic of interest for many researchers in recent years. This method increases student involvement in the learning process and strengthens 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking, collaboration and creativity (Rahmawati et al., 2020; Putri, 2021). PjBL allows students to learn through hands-on experience, work on real projects relevant to their lives, and apply the knowledge and skills they learn in real-world situations. Research by Nugraheni (2020) shows that students who learn through the PjBL method have a deeper understanding of the subject matter compared to students who learn through traditional methods. Students' active involvement in the learning process motivates them to better understand and apply the concepts being taught. In addition, Astuti et al., (2021) emphasized that PjBL helps students develop communication skills in English more

effectively, because they have to work in teams, discuss and present the results of their projects.

However, implementing PjBL is not without challenges. A study by Hartono, (2019) identified several obstacles faced by teachers in implementing PjBL, such as lack of support from schools, limited time, and lack of training for teachers. The Project Based Learning teaching method is still not commonly used in classes, especially in English classes in elementary schools. This is because implementing the Project Based Learning method in the classroom requires teachers to prepare a lot of equipment, a lot of time to ensure students can complete the product as fully as possible, a combination of teacher and student skills, and adequate supporting facilities (Martati, 2022). In addition, many English teachers continue to use a lecture-based and teacher-centered one-way learning approach (Lestari & Sutrisna, 2022). So that students can use their skills during learning and master competencies at a lower level. These obstacles can hinder the successful implementation of PjBL, especially in schools that do not have adequate resources.

Innovative learning tends to occur more often in private and international schools compared to state schools. This is caused by several main factors that are interrelated. Private and international schools generally have better access to educational resources, including more modern facilities, technological devices, and a wider variety of teaching materials (B. Santoso, 2020). Stronger financial support allows them to invest in developing more sophisticated and innovative learning programs (Wijaya, 2021). In addition, more flexible policies allow teachers to adopt and apply various new teaching methods that may not be able to be implemented in state schools due to bureaucratic limitations and strict regulations (Sari, 2019).

Private and international schools often have more freedom in choosing the curriculum they use, so they can integrate international curricula that place more emphasis on developing 21st century skills (Ananda, 2022).

In Bali, the implementation of English subjects varies depending on the type of school and the curriculum they use. National schools, which follow a curriculum set by the Government, generally offer English lessons as one of the compulsory subjects with additional enrichment programs to improve students' English skills (Nugraheni, 2020). The teaching methods tend to be more traditional, focusing on mastering grammar and vocabulary. Meanwhile, national plus and international schools use a more diverse and flexible curriculum (Astuti et al., 2021). National plus schools combine the national curriculum with international curriculum elements, so they are more experienced in applying more holistic and integrative approaches to English language learning such as project-based learning. On the other hand, international schools use a fully international curriculum, such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) or Cambridge, which emphasizes the use of English in all aspects of learning (Hartono, 2019).

Based on research (Dewi et al., 2020) which aims to describe elementary school English teachers' perceptions and application of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) in teaching English to young learners (TEYL), as well as the consistency between perceptions and implementation of PCK in TEYL especially in Gianyar. This research involved 2 elementary school English teachers from 2 different schools in Gianyar who were selected using convenience sampling. The results show that both teachers have positive perceptions of PCK in teaching English to young students. However, from observation data it is known that the two

teachers have a very low frequency of implementing the three components of PCK. Apart from that, it was revealed that there were inconsistencies between teacher perceptions and the implementation of PCK. In conclusion, the learning phenomenon in Bali has characteristic weaknesses namely, teachers use traditional teaching methods, teacher knowledge about learning innovation is still low, and teachers have inconsistencies.

Based on a review of existing literature, research regarding the application of innovative methods in learning English in Indonesia is still relatively limited and lacking in depth, especially in public schools. Public schools still have many shortcomings regarding facilities, internet access, and teachers with the appropriate qualifications. Most research focuses more on student learning outcomes and the effectiveness of certain teaching methods, such as digital media or direct teaching techniques (Putri, 2021; Rahmawati et al., 2020). This research often does not explain in detail how these methods are implemented in the classroom, the challenges teachers face, and how they overcome these obstacles. In addition, many studies do not link their findings to local contexts, making it difficult to apply their recommendations directly in schools with different conditions (Yulianti, 2019). This deficiency shows that there is a lack of studies that discuss the implementation of PjBL, especially regarding the implementation of innovative and contextual teaching strategies in various types of schools in Indonesia.

The selection of national plus schools as research locations was based on the unique characteristics these schools have, especially in terms of the use of a combined curriculum. National plus schools integrate the national curriculum with international curriculum elements, providing the opportunity to observe how

innovative teaching approaches are applied in a more dynamic and diverse learning environment (Handayani, 2019). The combined curriculum allows for flexibility in teaching methods, which can be adapted to student needs and potential. This provides an opportunity to explore various teaching strategies that may not be implemented in schools with a more rigid curriculum (Anggraini & Wulandari, 2020). National plus schools often have better access to educational resources and stronger support from the school and parents, which supports the implementation of more innovative and effective learning methods (Widodo, 2021). By researching at national plus schools, this research can provide broader and deeper insight into how innovative teaching methods can be adapted and implemented in the Indonesian educational context, as well as their impact on the learning process and development of students, especially young learners.

In Bali, the implementation of PjBL in teaching English in national plus and international schools has shown positive results. These schools, including Genta Saraswati Bilingual & Montessori School, have better access to educational resources, such as adequate facilities and diverse teaching materials. More flexible policies in these schools allow teachers more freedom in adopting and implementing the PjBL method (Sari, 2019).

Genta Saraswati Bilingual and Montessori School, as a national plus school that combines national and international curricula, offers a conducive environment for implementing PjBL. PjBL also contributes to student motivation and improves critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Research by Susanti, (2020) found that support from the entire school community, including teachers, students and parents, played an important role in the successful implementation of PjBL. At Genta

Saraswati Bilingual and Montessori School, parent involvement in their children's learning process helps create a more supportive and collaborative learning environment. However, several limitations need to be noted. The success of implementing PjBL is very dependent on teacher readiness and the availability of adequate resources. Therefore, there needs to be ongoing efforts to provide training for teachers and ensure that schools have the necessary support to implement these methods effectively. This research fills a gap in the literature by providing deeper insight into how PjBL can be implemented effectively in the Indonesian educational context, especially for young learners.

Therefore, this research was conducted at the Genta Saraswati Bilingual and Montessori School, Bali, because this school has implemented project-based learning. The curriculum implemented at Genta Saraswati Bilingual and Montessori School is an independent curriculum. The English teachers at Genta Saraswati & Montessori School are all English graduates. Researchers took class 3 subjects for this research. This school is a Montessori school, which is different from other elementary schools. According to (Al et al., 2012), the Montessori method, free activity in a prepared environment, can create a space that suits the needs of children of various ages. The Montessori system tries to make abstract knowledge concrete, more applicable in practice, and more physical.

This research focuses on implementing Project-Based Learning (PJBL) in national plus elementary schools in Bali. This research describes the implementation of Project Based Learning (PJBL), which includes developing an understanding of concepts and more varied implementation methods. This research also describes practices related to the implementation of Project-Based Learning

(PJBL) which can help teachers teach English not only by rote methods. This research can be a reference source for English teachers, especially elementary schools in Bali, on how to carry out Project-Based Learning (PJBL).

Genta Saraswati Bilingual and Montessori Primary School is a private elementary school established in 2022. Located in Gianyar Regency, Bali and operates under the Saraswati PR Foundation. This institution is known for its unique educational approach, combining the Cambridge Curriculum and the Indonesian Merdeka Curriculum, which offers a blend of international and national educational standards. The school employs 17 teachers, with a majority being English teachers, ensuring a strong emphasis on English language instruction. As a national plus school, Genta Saraswati Bilingual and Montessori School integrate the Montessori learning model, which emphasizes student-centered, hands-on learning and fosters independence and critical thinking among students. English is the primary medium of communication in the learning process, allowing students to immerse themselves in the language and develop proficiency through daily use. This bilingual approach aims to prepare students for global opportunities while maintaining a solid foundation in national education. The school's curriculum and teaching methods are designed to create a holistic learning environment that nurtures academic excellence, creativity, and personal growth.

Genta Saraswati is a school known for implementing innovative learning methods, including Project-Based Learning (PjBL). This school is committed to providing a learning environment that supports the development of students' critical, collaborative and creative skills (Prasetyo, 2021). In PjBL, students at Genta Saraswati Bilingual and Montessori School engage in projects that challenge

them to apply knowledge and skills in real-world contexts. This method allows students to learn through direct experience, solve real problems, and work together in teams to achieve specified goals (Susanti, 2020). Apart from that, PjBL also encourages students to think critically, conduct research, and develop innovative solutions to the challenges they face (Arifin, 2022). This approach not only improves their understanding of the subject matter but also prepares them to face challenges outside the school environment. The implementation of PjBL at Genta Saraswati Bilingual and Montessori School shows how innovative learning methods can be effectively integrated into the school curriculum, providing a more comprehensive and meaningful learning experience for students. Apart from that, the successful implementation of PjBL at Genta Saraswati Bilingual and Montessori School also shows the importance of support from the entire school community, including teachers, students and parents, in creating a learning environment that is conducive to the development of 21st century skills.

In this study, the researcher conducted a study on the implementation of Project-Based Learning in teaching English to young learners in Grades 3A and 3B at Genta Saraswati Bilingual & Montessori School Bali with the hope of gaining deeper insights into the effectiveness of PjBL in fostering critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity among students, and to understand the role of community support in the successful implementation of innovative learning methods. By addressing the challenges and implementing effective strategies, the school aims to create a more engaging and productive learning environment that prepares students for the demands of the 21st century.

1.2 Problem Identification of The Study

Assessing the differences in the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in public and private schools in Indonesia, it is important to consider the influence of the Merdeka curriculum and its relevance to English language learning. The Merdeka curriculum, designed to provide more flexibility in the teaching and learning process, supports the implementation of innovative learning methods such as PjBL. This is in line with the need to develop 21st-century skills, such as problem-solving and creativity, which are highly relevant in English language learning (B. Santoso, 2020; Wijaya, 2021). A comparison between public and private schools shows significant differences in the implementation of innovative learning methods such as Project-Based Learning (PjBL). Private schools, especially those with international standards, generally have better access to educational resources, including modern facilities and diverse teaching materials. Stronger financial support allows them to adopt and implement new teaching methods more flexibly, thus creating a dynamic learning environment responsive to the latest developments in education (Santoso, 2020; Wijaya, 2021). In contrast, public schools often face limited resources and strict bureaucracy, which can limit their ability to implement innovative learning methods. These limitations often result in more traditional teaching methods with a primary focus on mastering grammar and vocabulary, which are less supportive of developing 21st-century skills in students (Astuti et al., 2021; Nugraheni, 2020).

The conclusion from previous studies is that while there is evidence of the effectiveness of PjBL in improving student skills, many studies still do not describe in detail how the method is implemented in the field. Previous research often focuses on student learning outcomes and the general effectiveness of the method

but does not provide a detailed picture of the challenges faced in implementing PjBL, such as teacher readiness and resource support. In addition, many studies do not consider the local context or provide practical solutions to overcome these barriers (Rahmawati et al., 2020; Yulianti, 2019). These shortcomings indicate a gap in the literature that needs to be filled with more in-depth and contextualised research on the implementation of PjBL, challenges faced in its implementation, and strategies used by the teachers to overcome the challenges, especially in different types of schools in Indonesia.

The summary of the previous study review shows that there is a significant gap in research regarding the implementation of PjBL in the Indonesian educational context, especially in a school setting with a varied curriculum, such as a national plus school. The research on the implementation of PjBL at Genta Saraswati Bilingual & Montessori Primary School in Bali aims to fill this gap by providing a more comprehensive insight into the implementation of PjBL for young learners in grades 3A and 3B. With a focus on a national plus school that integrates national and international curricula, this research is expected to offer a deeper understanding of how this innovative learning method can be adapted and effectively implemented in the local context. The research also aims to identify specific challenges faced in the implementation of PjBL, the strategy used by the teachers to overcome the challenges, and provide practical recommendations to improve the effectiveness of this method in schools with similar characteristics 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. How is the implementation procedure of Project Based Learning at Genta Saraswati Bilingual & Montessori School?
- b. What are the challenges encountered by the teacher in implementing Project Based Learning at Genta Saraswati Bilingual & Montessori School?
- c. What are the strategies to cope with the challenges of implementing Project Based Learning at Genta Saraswati Bilingual & Montessori School?

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 Genta Saraswati Bilingual & Montessori School.
- 2 To investigate the challenges encountered by the teacher in implementing Project Based Learning at Genta Saraswati Bilingual & Montessori School.
- 3 To investigate strategies to cope with the challenges of implementing Project Based Learning at Genta Saraswati Bilingual & Montessori School.

1.5 Significance of the Study

1.5.1 Theoretical Significance

- a. This study is expected to contribute as a supporting reference source for further research.
- b. This study is expected to increase other researchers' interest in studying the field of English language learning, especially in teaching English to young learners.
- c. This research contributes to the understanding of how the PjBL method can deepen English language learning and enhance young learners' motivation and skills in a flexible and dynamic environment.
- d. This study used the theory of Project-Based Learning syntax by Fahlevi 2022, namely starting with essential questions, designing a plan, making a schedule, monitoring students and their progress, assessing the outcome, and evaluating the experience.

1.5.2 Practical Significance

a. For Teachers

1. This study is expected to be a practical guide for PjBL implementation: This research provides concrete guidance for teachers in implementing Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in English language teaching, especially for young learners. By identifying challenges such as time constraints, support from schools, and additional training needs, teachers can better prepare themselves to design and implement effective projects.

2. This study is expected to be PjBL adaptation strategies: This research offers concrete examples of how PjBL can be adapted for teaching English to children. It includes strategies for creating project activities that match the developmental level and interests of young learners, thus increasing relevance and student engagement in the learning process.

3. This study is expected able to developing innovative teaching practices: By providing strategies that are responsive to the needs of young learners, this research assists teachers in developing innovative teaching practices. This includes the enhancement of speaking, writing and critical thinking skills in English through methods that are fun and relevant to children's world, thus deepening their learning experience.

b. For Students

1. This study is expected to create active and contextualised learning: The application of PjBL in English language teaching provides opportunities for students to engage in more active and contextualised learning. PjBL-based projects allow students to apply their English knowledge in practical contexts, such as making presentations or compiling reports.

2. This study is expected to improve skills and motivation:
This research shows that students who engage in PjBL tend to show improvements in English language skills, as well as learning motivation and critical thinking ability. This means that PjBL not only deepens the understanding of the material but also prepares students for the use of English in daily life and future careers.

c. For School

This study is expected to provides empirical evidence on the benefits of PjBL in English language teaching that can be used by schools to develop policies and practices that support project-based learning. The findings can guide school management in designing teacher training programs that focus on the application of PjBL in English language teaching, allocating resources more effectively, and designing curricula that integrate such innovative methods. With the right support, schools can improve the quality of English education and strengthen their position as innovative educational institutions, as well as facilitate students in developing deeper English language skills.

d. For Researchers

The results of this study were expected to provide a solid foundation for further exploration of the application of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in English language teaching. The

research identified gaps in the existing literature, such as the lack of in-depth understanding of implementing PjBL in English contexts in schools with different curricula. The findings are expected to encourage more in-depth studies on the adaptation of PjBL for English language teaching as well as its integration with other teaching approaches. In addition, this research opens up opportunities for longitudinal studies that evaluate the long-term impact of PjBL implementation on students' English language learning outcomes and 21st-century skills development.

1.6 Scope of the Research

The scope of this research is limited to investigating how teachers implement project-based learning as a method to teach English to young learners and the impact of project-based learning on young learners' achievement in English classes. It also discusses the challenges experienced by teachers when implementing project-based learning and the strategies teachers use to overcome these challenges.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

Key terms used in this study are defined to help the reader understand and prevent misunderstanding.

1.7.1 Conceptual Definition

a. Young Learner

According to Cambridge English, young learners are children enrolled in the first six years of formal education, aged between 6 and 12 years old (Cambridge Assessment, 2019). Children are in a crucial cognitive and social development period at this stage, where they begin to develop the basic skills needed for future learning. This definition underscores this age group's very specific educational needs, including approaches that support the development of their language, cognition and social skills.

Oxford Academic adds that young learners have different physical, psychological, social, emotional, conceptual, and cognitive development from children of a younger age. However, they have the same rights and needs in an educational context (Oxford Academic, 2021). These needs include how they interact with the subject matter and adapt to new teaching methods. Therefore, the approach used in teaching should be appropriate to their stage of development.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that the definition of young learners emphasises the need for teaching approaches designed with their unique development in mind. Effective methods for this age group should accommodate various aspects of their development and support holistic and adaptive learning.

b. Project Based Learning

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is defined as a student-centered teaching method in which students engage in a problem-solving experience with a product as the end result (Widiyati & Pangesti, 2022). This method emphasizes on students' active involvement in the learning process, allowing them to explore a given case, assess, interpret the problem, and synthesize information to come up with creative solutions. PjBL facilitates learning through accurate and relevant projects, where students apply the knowledge they have acquired in a practical context.

Suciani et al. (2018) explained that PjBL effectively improves students' critical thinking skills and allows them to learn deeply through hands-on experience (Rineksiane, 2022). These projects direct students to work together, plan, and present their results, improving their communication and collaboration skills.

Based on the explanation above, PjBL is an effective method for improving 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and communication. This method utilises real-life experiences to deepen students' understanding and develop practical skills that can be applied outside the school environment.

1.7.2 Operational Definition

- a. In this study, young learners at Montessori Primary School Bali are defined as children under 12 years old, encompassing students from grades 1 to 6. This age group is in a crucial stage

of building foundational skills essential for future learning. Tailored teaching approach can significantly enhance their learning outcomes. By focusing on children under 12 years old, this study aims to evaluate how project-based learning (PjBL) impacts their English language development, providing insights into the effectiveness of this method for enhancing their educational experience.

- b. Project-based learning (PjBL) is a teaching method used by English teachers at Montessori Primary School Bali to teach English to young learners. PjBL involves students in real-world projects that integrate language skills with practical tasks like presentations, report writing, and group work. This method creates a dynamic learning experience that fosters critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills. By working on relevant projects, students can better understand and apply their English knowledge. PjBL is expected to improve young learners' speaking, writing, and comprehension abilities, as well as their social and problem-solving skills.