

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter deeply presented the research introductions of the study and elaborated the research background, identification problem, research problems, research objectives, and research significances.

1.1 Research Background

One of the fundamental pillars in the development of a nation is education. In Indonesia, improving the quality of human resources makes education the main focus. After the implementation of the National Education System Law Number 20 of 2003 (Republik Indonesia, 2003), the goal of national education is to create a fair and equitable framework, which guarantees that every child, without exception, has the right to quality education. According to the Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia (2019), "Quality education is the right of every child, including children with special needs." This illustrates the government's dedication to ensuring equal access to education for all citizens.

Within this framework, the importance of inclusive education is increasing. This approach emphasizes the involvement of every student in the teaching and learning experience, regardless of their background, abilities, or specific needs. As stated by UNESCO (2005), "Inclusive education is about changing and reforming educational systems to address the diverse needs of students." The goal of this methodology is to foster an educational atmosphere that recognizes and embraces diversity in the classroom.

Every student has the same chance to get a good education that supports their potential. A good education system should cover all students to achieve a certain goal of learning. The goal of learning develops students' potentials without addressing the students' diversity (Ediyanto, dkk., 2017). Moreover, a good education system should create an equitable society and respect the diversity of students' needs regardless of factors such as disability, gender, age, ethnicity, and geographical location (Ediyanto, dkk., 2017; Efendi, 2018). Respecting diversity means that teachers should consider the ways of teaching because every student has different needs and characteristics. Whereas, creating an equitable society indicates that disabled students have the opportunity to get an education with regular students besides learning in schools with special education. Special education has a weakness in developing disabled students' potentials because it excludes them from their real social life and creates a social gap for disabled students to communicate with their environment (Steven, dkk., 2016). As an effort to create a good education system, the government provides inclusive education.

Inclusive education is a fundamental principle that underpins efforts to ensure equitable access to quality education for all students, regardless of their diverse backgrounds, abilities, or characteristics. It represents a paradigm shift from segregated approaches toward education to one that embraces diversity, fosters belonging, and promotes the full participation of every learner within the educational system (Florian, 2014). Over the past few

decades, inclusive education has gained momentum as a global imperative, driven by international conventions, national policies, and grassroots advocacy movements aimed at advancing the rights and well-being of individuals with disabilities and other marginalized groups (UNESCO, 2009).

The concept of inclusive education emerged in response to widespread discrimination and exclusion experienced by individuals with disabilities within traditional educational settings (Booth, 2000). Historically, children with disabilities were often denied access to mainstream schools and were instead placed in separate special education institutions or excluded from education altogether. This segregation not only perpetuated stigma and inequality but also deprived these children of valuable opportunities for learning, socialization, and personal development (Artiles & Kozleski, 2007). Recognizing the inherent injustice of such practices, the inclusive education movement sought to challenge existing norms and promote more inclusive approaches to education that prioritize diversity, equity, and social justice.

Inclusive education means that all students are part of the school community, regardless of their strengths and weaknesses. Students with disabilities do not need to be placed in different institutions. They deserve to have full access to all resources and social interactions that are present in the general education classroom. The inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom is a current legal requirement in the United States according to the nation's special education law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (n.d.). Mute and deaf students refer to

individuals who have significant hearing loss as well as difficulty in speaking. This condition can be caused by a variety of factors, including genetics, neonatal infection, or head trauma. Deaf and mute students may have difficulty communicating through spoken language and may rely on alternative methods such as sign language, writing, or gestures to express themselves.

Deaf and mute students often face unique challenges in the learning process, including communication barriers, limited access to information, social isolation, language delays, and lack of accommodations. Despite this, deaf and mute students can thrive academically and socially with the right support, accommodations, and inclusive teaching practices.

Research by Qi and Mitchell (2012) found that inclusive classrooms can improve the English language skills of students with hearing loss, especially if they get support from teachers and classmates, and use assistive technology. However, in previous studies, no one has conducted research at SDN 2 Bengkala regarding English teaching procedures carried out in inclusive classes, the challenges of teachers in teaching English in inclusive classes, and how teachers overcome these challenges.

This research is motivated by the critical need for inclusive education, which ensures that all students, regardless of their abilities, have access to quality learning opportunities. Deaf and mute students face unique challenges in acquiring a new language, such as difficulties in auditory processing and communication barriers, making it essential to identify effective teaching

methods tailored to their needs. Despite the growing body of literature on inclusive education, there is a notable lack of specific studies focusing on English language instruction for this demographic, highlighting the importance of this research in filling that gap. Additionally, the study aims to explore the pivotal role of teachers in creating supportive learning environments and adapting their instructional strategies to meet the diverse needs of their students.

The selection of SDN 2 Bengkala as the focus of the research is based on several compelling reasons. This school is known for its commitment to inclusive education, making it an ideal place to explore the practical application of English language teaching to students with hearing impairments. Various inclusive practices have been implemented to accommodate the diverse needs of its student population, including deaf and mute students.

Inclusive education is a fundamental principle in modern educational systems, emphasizing that all students, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, have the right to receive a quality education (Florian & Linklater, 2010). The demographic composition of SDN 2 Bengkala is highly relevant to this study, as the school serves a significant number of students with disabilities. This allows the research to provide insights into the specific strategies and methodologies employed by educators to facilitate effective English language learning in an inclusive environment.

Understanding the unique challenges faced by students with disabilities is essential for developing effective teaching strategies (McGregor & Newman, 2013). This understanding is crucial for grasping the experiences of both teachers and students in this context, which can contribute to the development of best practices for teaching English to students with special needs.

Additionally, SDN 2 Bengkala is located in an area where access to quality education for students with disabilities remains a challenge. This research aims to highlight the importance of inclusive education and the need for effective teaching strategies that can enhance the academic and social outcomes of deaf and mute students. Policies promoting inclusive education are vital for ensuring that all students have access to quality learning opportunities (UNESCO, 2005).

The findings from this research are expected to serve as a valuable resource for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders in the field of education, particularly in promoting inclusive practices in similar contexts. Furthermore, the school has a history of collaboration with local organizations and support services that focus on the education of students with disabilities, providing a supportive framework for implementing inclusive education and offering additional resources that can enhance the learning experiences of deaf and mute students.

Effective teaching practices are crucial for enhancing the learning experiences of students with special needs (Darling-Hammond, 2006). By

examining the practices at SDN 2 Bengkala, this research can reveal the role of community involvement in fostering an inclusive educational environment.

Overall, SDN 2 Bengkala was chosen for this research due to its commitment to inclusive education, the significant presence of deaf and mute students, the challenges faced in the region regarding access to quality education, and the collaborative efforts with local organizations. This provides a rich foundation for exploring the implementation of English teaching in inclusive classrooms and contributing to the broader discourse on effective educational practices for students with disabilities. This research contributes to the literature by providing insights into effective practices for teaching English to students with hearing impairments (Florian & Linklater, 2010).

Inclusive education at SDN 2 Bengkala plays a crucial role in supporting deaf and mute students in mastering the English language, ensuring that they have equal access to quality education alongside their peers. The writer learned about the specific needs of these students, including their deafness and muteness, from their teachers and through interviews with the school principal. The implementation of this teaching approach involves a collaborative effort between the English teacher and a sign language teacher, who work together to create a comprehensive learning experience tailored to the unique needs of each student. In this context, three forms of sign language are utilized: the local mother tongue, national sign language, and international sign language. This multilingual approach not only facilitates effective

communication but also enriches the learning environment, allowing students to engage with the material in a way that resonates with their individual backgrounds and experiences.

With two deaf and mute students in the sixth grade, the teaching strategies employed at SDN 2 Bengkala are designed to address the diverse communication and learning needs of all students in the classroom. As Florian and Linklater (2010) assert, "Inclusive education is a fundamental principle in modern educational systems, emphasizing that all students, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, have the right to receive a quality education." This principle is reflected in the adaptive teaching methods used by educators, which aim to foster an inclusive atmosphere where every student can thrive academically and socially.

Research indicates that inclusive education not only benefits students with disabilities but also enhances the overall learning experience for all students by promoting collaboration and mutual respect (Hattie, 2009). By incorporating various sign languages into the curriculum, teachers can facilitate better comprehension of English language concepts, while also encouraging social interactions among students. This interaction is vital for the emotional and social development of deaf and mute students, as it provides them with opportunities to build relationships and develop essential social skills.

Moreover, the inclusive practices at SDN 2 Bengkala contribute to a positive classroom culture that values diversity and fosters empathy among

students. The presence of typically developing peers allows for meaningful exchanges that enrich the educational experience for everyone involved. Ultimately, the commitment to inclusive education at SDN 2 Bengkala not only supports the academic growth of deaf and mute students but also cultivates a sense of belonging and community within the school, ensuring that all students are empowered to reach their full potential.

1.2 Problem Identification

It is generally understood that not all children have the same communication skills and language comprehension, especially children who are deaf and mute. These children with special needs tend to face obstacles in receiving and conveying information verbally, which becomes a particular challenge in learning English. In the context of an inclusive classroom, teachers must be able to adjust teaching methods and approaches to accommodate the needs of deaf and mute students alongside regular students. This requires teachers to have special skills in teaching English to students with hearing and speech impairments (Sari et al., 2022).

Previous studies have discussed the challenges of teaching students with special needs, but most have focused on students with intellectual or physical disabilities and have paid less attention to the implementation of English teaching for deaf and mute students at the elementary school level (Wijaya, 2021). Furthermore, there has been limited research that thoroughly examines the strategies and methods used by teachers in the inclusive classroom context at SDN 2 Bengkala. Therefore, this study will take a direct observational

approach to the English teaching process in an inclusive classroom, focusing on the teacher's experience in implementing effective teaching methods for deaf and mute students (Rahmawati, 2023). This research is expected to contribute new insights into the development of inclusive and adaptive English teaching strategies for students with special needs at the elementary school level.

1.3. Research Questions :

This research discussed in detail the research question below:

1. How is the English teaching procedure conducted in an inclusive classroom in SDN 2 Bengkala?
2. What are teachers' challenges in teaching English in an inclusive classroom at SDN 2 Bengkala?
3. How does teacher cope with these challenges?

1.4. Research Objective

The research objectives based on the provided research questions can be formulated as follows

1. To explain the English teaching procedure to students with deaf and mute conducted in an inclusive classroom in SDN 2 Bengkala.
2. To classify the teachers' challenges in teaching English to students with deaf and mute in an inclusive classroom at SDN 2 Bengkala.
3. To identify the teachers' strategies to overcome those challenges.

1.5 Research Significances

The significance of this research for various stakeholders can be outlined as follows:

1.5.1 Theoretical Significance

1. Development of Inclusive Learning Theory: This research can enrich the literature on inclusive learning, particularly in the context of English language teaching. By analyzing the methods and strategies used in teaching deaf students, this study can provide new insights into how inclusive learning theory can be applied practically.
2. Learning Model for Deaf Students: This research may produce a specific learning model for deaf students in the context of English language teaching. This model can serve as a reference for other researchers and educators who wish to understand the best ways to teach English to students with special needs.
3. Contribution to Language and Communication Theory: By focusing on deaf students, this research can contribute to the theory of language and communication, especially in understanding how students with hearing impairments interact and learn the English language. This can pave the way for further research in the fields of linguistics and education.

1.5.2 Practical Significance

1. Effective Teaching Strategies: This research can provide practical recommendations for teachers in designing and implementing more effective teaching strategies for deaf students. By understanding the needs

and challenges faced by these students, teachers can adapt their teaching methods to enhance students' understanding and English language skills.

2. **Improvement of Educational Quality:** By applying the findings from this research, schools can improve the quality of education provided to deaf students. This not only benefits the students but also creates a more inclusive learning environment for all students.
3. **Training for Teachers:** This research can serve as a foundation for training programs for teachers in teaching students with special needs. By providing appropriate training, teachers can be better prepared to face the challenges that may arise in teaching English to deaf students.
4. **Awareness and Acceptance:** This research can also raise awareness and acceptance of deaf students within the school environment. By understanding the best ways to support them, schools can create a more inclusive and supportive culture for all students.

1.6. Limitation of The Study

The limitation of this research is that it is only focused on the implementation of English teaching in an inclusive classroom context specifically for sixth-grade deaf and mute students at SDN 2 Bengkala. Furthermore, this research does not delve into aspects beyond the scope of the title, such as the broader implications of inclusive education or the experiences of other student groups within the same educational setting.