

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents: (1) background of the study, (2) problems of the study, (3) objectives of the study, and (4) significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

English is very influential today, specifically when applied to early learners. From childhood, a person can be born to learn new things. When children get used to a foreign language, they can learn it more efficiently and become proficient in mastering that language. According to Ghasemi and Hashemi (2011), the onset of birth to ten is the best time to introduce a new language. In this statement, children are at the best age to learn new words, and they can learn words faster. At the age of young learners, these are periods of easy acquisition of any kind. Children can more easily recognize new words based on the competencies each child has. Chomsky (1965) argued that there are two parts of competence; first, linguistic competence is one's ability to use. While the second, linguistic performance, is the real implications of speaking. Eventually, these two things are very influential in acquiring new word.

English in Indonesia is only a foreign language, not a second language. It is taught as a subject in school. Jenkins (2003) also suggested that English as a foreign language (EFL) in Indonesia, while the mother tongue is Indonesian, is

mostly applied to education in this country. An educational institution without official status still depends on the standards set by the community. According to Lie (2007), EFL has a powerful position, prestige, and success as a foreign language in Indonesia. In other words, the existence of a foreign language has had a significant impact on Indonesian education and culture.

Indonesia is one of the countries that started the English language subject and local content at ground level. Nevertheless, that was enough to prove that English is important for young students in Indonesia because by studying early on, it will be easier to continue learning. That is because young learners are at a golden age to analyze new things. According to Lightbown and Spada (1999), the young learner period is the golden age for creating simultaneous bilingual children due to the volume of the child's brain, which is an easy-to-acquire language unit. According to Suyanto (2008), Indonesian young learners are elementary school students aged six to twelve years. Hence, young learners have great potential for acquiring language.

Afterward, the importance of English being learned from an early age can be seen and felt immediately after learning it. Supriyanti (2012) suggested that there are several reasons for giving English in elementary schools, including the general assumption that the younger children learn a new language, the better their abilities. Economic globalization is encouraging an English-speaking workforce to make ends meet in the international economy, and the spirit of

parents towards children in learning English from an early age has social and economic effects in the national context. Many parents want their children to learn English at school and are also willing to spend some money for their children to learn English (Oktaviani & Fauzan, 2017). In essence, this is very useful for young learners in Indonesia because it helps them get involved with global life.

Several schools in Indonesia have adopted linguistic communication as a second language rather than a foreign language in this era. A person usually obtains L2 after obtaining L1. The process of spoken language acquisition will be faster when someone continues to use their tongue without rules, but the amount of speech usage is increasing. Ellis (1986) explained that it is only after knowing a new mother tongue that we can learn a second language, but this is a little more difficult because the rules of every language are not the same. In addition, second language acquisition is a process of learning another language after the original language (Gass & Selinker, 2008). Subsequently, L1 applied to be the first language understood since childhood while parents began to introduce the language. It is different from the second language. It is not used much in everyday life, only at certain times.

Furthermore, second language acquiring experts generally believe that the mother tongue influences the mastery process of second language learners who can assist in L2 (Ellis, 1986). Students accept the hypothesis, the properties

concerning the target language's structure based on data input (Corder, 1976, as cited in Ellis, 1986). In this situation, second language acquisition will be easy if the learner has mastered the first language well because these first language skills can affect L2.

In practice, learning a second language is not easy to do. Therefore, there is one theory that applies to the new terms, namely, the behaviorism theory. The basic concept of behaviorism theory is that someone after birth does not have anything whose environment plays a significant role in obtaining words. Littlewood (1984) argued that behaviorism is inseparable from the environment and is the benchmark that is the child's environment as a significant influence factor. In the learning process, teachers and school are the most dominant exposures in the success of learning in children, especially if the teachers and school have huge goals in the implementation of terms to be applied. The student's learning environment could potentially influence how students cope with situations in the language acquisition environment (Gijbels et al., 2006). Ultimately, there is a connection between behaviorism and the environment.

In acquiring terms, each individual should pay attention to the existing environment, starting with whom they are talking to and what atmospheres are going on. According to Kiatkheeree (2018), the learning environment plays a crucial role in proficiency in learning new words. In the same way, Ellis (1986) also argued that there are two environments in obtaining language

communication, (1) the formal environment and (2) the non-formal environment. The formal environment can be surroundings where one has to speak English according to the rules, for example, when speaking at school with teachers and other public places. Furthermore, in the informal environment, it does not require someone to talk according to the rules of the language. However, comprehension and fluency skills increase when using L2 formally or informally. In this statement, teachers and parents must also coordinate with others for students' success in learning for achieving new words.

At this time, English is not only applied as a subject but also implemented as a medium of instruction in several educational institutions in Indonesia, especially in primary schools. In this statement, schools usually implement bilingual education that involves the language of instruction, namely English. In the curriculum, teachers must teach one or more subjects as a medium of instruction (Eurydice, 2006). Because of this, in some schools, teachers are required to teach lessons such as mathematics and science in English. Not only that, teachers are expected to have language and content competence. A teacher also must know the good things and the dangers of applying English as a medium of instruction. In that statement, it can create benefits and threats, speculation from teachers' sides. One of the best effects of implementing English as the language of instruction is that students and teachers can develop proficiency in English and converse cause difficulties, namely inhibiting self-expression in the

classroom (Chang, 2010). In this statement, teachers must have experience, education, and abilities to realize the vision and mission of a school lesson.

Afterward, the communication system has various perceptions of a teacher who teaches. That can be felt directly by teachers who have learned English as medium of instruction in schools especially for young learners. The appointment of English as a teaching medium has penetrated education throughout the world (Crystal, 2004, as cited in Ebad, 2014). As Marsh (2006) stated, between 1995 and 2005, many educational institutions noted a significant increase in interest in adopting the language of instruction as English. It makes educators feel important about doing English as a medium of instruction in this globalized world.

Based on a preliminary study at Angelly Kids Primary School Prabumulih, the teacher revealed through an informal interview that there is science and mathematics learning by using English as the medium of instruction. The learning applied to grades 1-6 who attend school there (N, Personal communication, February 21st, 2020). Then, an informal interview also was conducted with the school principal by stating that teachers who taught science and math required learning using English in the classroom. In this statement, Angelly kids Prabumulih primary school applied international and Cambridge adaptation curriculums. That teaching and learning process should be given to teachers who have truly experienced in every subject should provide that to teachers who have truly experienced in every subject. They can use English when

the basics of a teacher are not in subjects such as mathematics and science at SD Angelly Kids Prabumulih (A, Personal communication, February 27th, 2020). Teachers can know many benefits and threats by doing this learning, especially from the teachers' side. At the same time, it is interesting to know how teachers view the various benefits and threats in the teaching and learning process required by using English in science and mathematics lesson.

This research addressed four researchers who had conducted research related to the study. First, research from Ibrahim (2001) found out the opportunities and the dangers of using EMI based in Indonesia. In this research, English as a medium instruction became a means to solve students' problems rather than as a subject. Second, Yuliasih (2019) investigated mathematics and science teachers' perceptions of English as a medium of instruction. This research told about all teachers' felt that they had many opportunities and threats to do English as a medium of instruction by seeing the background of education of teachers in the school. Third, Erliana (2018) explained several benefits and threats of using English as media, especially for the students and teachers. Last, a study done by Muttaqin and Ida (2015) concluded that many programs used English language skills, one of which was student exchanged, which motivated students to apply it in teaching and learning activities. It had a negative and positive effect on learners. In addition, with this program, many students felt that this could be

useful for the future and knowing other cultures which were important attractions for learning.

As a result, this phenomenon encourages the researcher to do similar research on teachers thinking about excellence and the menace in learning English as the medium of instruction for both students and teachers at SD Angelly Kids Prabumulih. This research aims to determine the teachers' views on the implementation of English used in mathematics and science learning for young learners. After that, the researcher chose this school because this primary school is one of the popular primary schools which should also have experience in using English as the medium instruction there. Based on this explanation, the researcher was interested in conducting research entitled "Teachers' Perceptions on the Implementation of English as a Medium of Instruction for Young Learners."

1.2 Problems of the study

Based on the background, the focus problem is formulated as follows:

1. What were teachers' perceptions on the benefit of using English as the medium of instruction at SD Angelly Kids Prabumulih?
2. What were teachers' perceptions on the threat of using English as the medium of instruction at SD Angelly Kids Prabumulih?

1.3 Objectives of the study

Based on the problem of the study, the objective of this study is formulated as follows:

1. To find out teachers' perceptions on the benefit of using English as the medium of instruction at SD Angelly Kids Prabumulih.
2. To find out teachers' perceptions on the threat of using English as the medium of instruction at SD Angelly Kids Prabumulih.

1.4 Significance of the study

This research is expected to benefit the reader and give positive and acceptable information for students and instructors of some ideas at SD Angelly Kids Prabumulih. The research supports the explanation of teachers' perceptions about the implementation of using EMI for young learners. In this situation, all readers can know the benefits and the threats of EMI in the learning process.

First, students are expected to be able to more easily understand what is explained by the teacher by using a foreign language that is applied to mathematics and science lessons and increasing grades in learning.

Second, the results of this study are expected to provide meaningful direction and information for teachers to find out the needs of students, the obstacles faced during learning, and to find out more about the benefits of using and even the threats posed by the use of EMI.

Furthermore, others are expected to help researchers as a source of research in the form of information that can facilitate their work, especially in the use of EMI in teaching mathematics and science in class.

The last, as a researcher, this provides his own experience that can give broader information and find out the problem and solve it. The findings of the study could lead to a better understanding of EMI in the future.