

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Chapter I contains the research background, research problems, research objectives, scope and limitations, research significance, and definitions of key terms, which are presented sequentially.

1.1 Research Background

English as an International Language (EIL), according to McKay (2018) is a variety of English used by both native and non-native speakers in global communication contexts. McKay (2018) also explains that EIL emphasizes communication and interaction based on the purposes of communication as well as speakers' linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In English language teaching, the implementation of EIL principles is closely related to the role of teachers. McKay (as cited in Renandya 2009) explains that teachers play an important role in supporting the successful implementation of EIL in classroom learning. In order to implement EIL principles, teachers need to understand the concept of EIL and be able to apply appropriate teaching approaches that support communication and intercultural interaction in English language learning, as stated by Renandya (2009).

Several previous studies have discussed EIL in different educational contexts, including university, secondary school, and teacher education contexts. According to Harendita (2018), Simanjuntak and Lien (2021), and Tauchid et al., (2022), previous studies generally focused on teachers' and students' perceptions toward EIL, classroom implementation, and the acceptance of English varieties in English language teaching. The findings of those studies indicate that EIL has received positive responses in language learning contexts, although native-speaker norms still strongly influence classroom practices.

In the Indonesian context, English is taught as a foreign language and is commonly implemented as a local-content subject in elementary schools (Faridatuunnisa, 2020). However, Lee and Drajiati (2019) as well as Simanjuntak and Lien (2021) explain that the implementation of EIL principles in English

language teaching is still limited, since English teaching practices in Indonesia tend to prioritize Standard English and native-speaker norms. As a result, both teachers and students may feel less confident in using English varieties outside Standard English in classroom learning (Simanjuntak & Lien, 2021).

Previous studies have also highlighted the importance of EIL pedagogy in English language teaching. Yamin and Purwati (2021) explain that innovative teaching practices, teacher competence, and learning materials that are connected to global and local contexts (S. L. McKay, 2018) are important in supporting the implementation of EIL in classroom learning. In addition, the application of EIL is also considered relevant in the context of teaching English to young learners because young learners need meaningful, communicative, and contextualized learning experiences from an early age. In this context, teachers play an important role in shaping learners' understanding of English as a global language that can be used by people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

From the previous studies above, it can be seen that EIL has been discussed in various English language teaching contexts. However, studies focusing on teachers' perceptions toward the application of EIL in teaching English to young learners are still limited, particularly in Indonesian elementary school contexts. Therefore, this study attempts to explore teachers' perceptions toward the application of EIL in teaching EYL classrooms.

1.2 Research Problem

The research problems are stated as follows:

1. How do elementary school teachers perceive the application of EIL in teaching EYL?
2. How is EIL applied in EYL classrooms?

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To explore elementary school teachers' perceptions toward the application of EIL in teaching EYL.
2. To identify how EIL is applied in EYL classrooms.

1.4 Scope and Limitation

The scope of this research focuses on teachers' perceptions toward the application of EIL in teaching English to young learners (EYL). This study specifically discusses how EIL principles are applied in EYL classrooms, including classroom practices, teaching materials, and teachers' views toward EIL implementation.

The limitation of this research is that the participants only consist of elementary school English teachers in Malang.

1.5 Research Significances

1. Elementary School English Teachers

This study is expected to increase teachers' understanding and awareness of the application of EIL in teaching English to young learners. In addition, this research may provide insights for teachers regarding the implementation of EIL principles in EYL classrooms.

2. English Education Students

This research is expected to provide English Education students with a better understanding of the implementation of EIL in EYL contexts and help them prepare for future English language teaching practices, especially for young learners.

3. Curriculum Developers

This study is expected to provide useful insights for curriculum developers in designing or developing English learning materials and classroom practices that are relevant to EIL principles in elementary school contexts.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, the researcher provides the definitions of key terms used in this study as follows:

1. English as an International Language (EIL)

English as an International Language (EIL) refers to the use of English as a means of communication among people from different linguistic and cultural

backgrounds. In this study, EIL is viewed as an approach to English language teaching that emphasizes communication, intercultural understanding, and the acceptance of different varieties of English (S. L. McKay, 2018)

2. English for Young Learners (EYL)

English for Young Learners (EYL) refers to the teaching and learning of English for children in elementary school age. In this study, EYL focuses on English language teaching practices for young learners in elementary school contexts.

3. Elementary School Teachers

Elementary school teachers in this study refer to English teachers who teach young learners at elementary school level in Malang.

