

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with an explanation of the research background of the study, the research questions, the research objectives, the research significances, the research limitations, and the definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Research

Kampus Mengajar Program is one of the initiatives of the *Kementrian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi* (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology henceforth *Kemendikbudristek*) of the Republic of Indonesia in order to improve the quality of education in primary schools, especially in *terdepan, terluar, tertinggal* (frontier, outermost and least developed henceforth 3T) areas. The objective of the Kampus Mengajar program is to empower students to actively participate in the educational activities of nearby primary, secondary, or high schools, either in their residential area or at a location they have chosen for their placement (Anugrah, 2021). Students from all academic programs at any university that has implemented Kurikulum Merdeka in Indonesia are eligible to participate in this program.

Students enrolled in this program are tasked with the duty of assisting schools in a multitude of ways, such as enhancing literacy and numeracy proficiencies, facilitating the integration of technology, and aiding with administrative tasks (Arfi & Hidayati, 2023). As student teachers from the English department, students are asked to introduce English learning to students at school as a requirement for success in completing learning activities at partner institutions.

To introduce English to students at the target school, several requirements must be met. For instance, the English Education study program at one of the universities in Jambi allows students to participate in the Kampus Mengajar program by providing a *Formulir Kesepakatan Perolehan Kredit Pembelajaran Program Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka* (Learning Credit Acquisition Agreement form henceforth KPKP form). This form includes a list of courses that need to be converted along with the learning outcomes that must be achieved, one of which is "Teaching English for Young Learners" (Henceforth TEYL). The required learning outcomes include designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating English learning programs for young learners.

To enhance students' literacy skills in both Indonesian and also English, a range of strategic measures have been implemented. Certain student teacher, whose placement institutions do not require English courses, are even eager to establish extra lessons. The supplementary classes are designed for students who have a keen interest in acquiring English language skills through participation in the form of English Club. English is taught by educators in schools with the objective of enabling students to gain fundamental English language skills. To acquire these skills, students first acquire vocabulary. Harahap (2024) stated that when learning English, the primary skill that students must acquire is a high level of vocabulary proficiency.

The urgency of this study increases considering the importance of foreign language mastery as a basic skill that must be possessed by the younger generation in the era of globalization. Through appropriate and effective teaching from

teachers, it is expected that students will not only be able to understand and use new vocabulary, but will also be able to develop broader communication skills, which will ultimately support the overall improvement of the quality of national education.

This urgency has received a positive response from the government.

Kemendikbudristek announced a significant decision:

“Mata pelajaran Bahasa Inggris pada sekolah dasar, madrasah ibtidaiyah, atau bentuk lain yang sederajat menjadi mata pelajaran pilihan yang dapat diselenggarakan berdasarkan kesiapan Satuan Pendidikan sampai dengan tahun ajaran 2026/2027 dan beralih menjadi mata pelajaran wajib pada tahun ajaran 2027/2028” (Kemendikbud, 2024).

which reads “English subjects at primary schools, madrasah ibtidaiyah, or other equivalent forms become optional subjects that can be held based on the readiness of the Education Unit until the 2026/2027 academic year and switch to compulsory subjects in the 2027/2028 academic year”. This step is implemented through Permendikbudristek Number 12/2024 (Kemendikbud, 2024).

Although there is a lot of study on Kampus Mengajar program, little of it specifically addresses English teaching to young learners, most of it only focuses on Kampus Mengajar in general. In this context, Kampus Mengajar allows early-semester of student teachers, who have not had any prior knowledge about TEYL to participate and the study program requires them to teach English to elementary school students as part of course credit conversion requirements for Kampus Mengajar program. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate the challenges these student teachers face and the strategies they employ. This research can offer significant perspectives for student teachers participating in the next batch of

Kampus Mengajar program or other teaching practice, in order to enhance their strategies for teaching english to young learners.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What are the challenges faced by student teachers in teaching English to young learners at Kampus Mengajar Program?
2. How do the student teachers overcome the challenges in teaching English to young learners at Kampus Mengajar Program?

1.3 Purposes of the Research

1. To describe the challenges faced by student teachers in teaching English to young learners at Kampus Mengajar program.
2. To describe the strategies applied by student teachers for their teaching English challenges at Kampus Mengajar program.

1.4 Limitations of the Research

In this research, there are some limitations of the study. Firstly, the research only focuses on student teachers from English Education study program. Secondly, this research will investigate the participants who have completed the Kampus Mengajar program batches 6 and 7 in elementary school. Thirdly, this research will only focus on the process experienced by student teachers during their teaching English to young learners at Kampus Mengajar program.

1.5 Significances of the Research

1. For the Student of English Study Program

The objective of this research is to support student teachers in recognizing the difficulties and approaches involved in teaching english to young learners. By doing so, it allows individuals to sufficiently equip themselves for future teaching roles or for student teachers who will participate in the next batch of the Kampus Mengajar program.

2. For the lectures

This research is advantageous for lecturers as it empowers them to mentor and equip students with the essential knowledge and competencies required to fulfill the anticipated learning objectives in teaching English to young learners during their involvement in the Teaching Practice.

3. For the Study Program

This research is useful for the English Education study program to identify potential challenges and provide better preparation for students in fulfilling the KPKP form for the Kampus Mengajar program in teaching English to young learners.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

In this section, the researcher presents a number of key terms pertaining to the research in order to facilitate accurate comprehension and prevent misinterpretation errors. The important words are defined as follows:

1. Kampus Mengajar

Kampus Mengajar (henceforth KM) is a program that offers students the opportunity to study off campus for one semester in order to develop their ability to solve complex problems by becoming teacher partners (Kemendikbud, 2023a). This initiative aims to innovate in the field of learning by developing strategies and learning models that are creative, innovative, and enjoyable.

2. Student Teacher

Student teachers are individuals who are currently studying to become teachers. Rokhayani (2016) stated these individuals are still in the learning phase and are preparing themselves. This preparation beneficial for them before enter the teaching profession with the goal of educating and shaping the minds of future students. In this research, student teachers referred to student from English Education study program who participated in the Kampus Mengajar program

3. Challenges

Challenges is the situation of being faced with something that needs great mental or physical effort in order to be done successfully and therefore tests a person's ability. In this research, the challenge referred to a problem that arises when student teachers teach english to young learners.

4. Strategies

Strategies is a detailed plan for achieving success in situations. In this research, the strategies referred to methods that student teachers can use to teach english to young learners.