

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

English is a universal language because most countries in the world use it as the main language. In addition, English is one of the most important international languages to master or learn. Several countries, especially former British colonies, place English as a second language that must be mastered after their native language. Mastery of foreign languages, especially English in Indonesia is still relatively low. This is proven by EPI (English Proficiency Index) data which is a research conducted globally by EF (English First) in 2019, that Indonesia is ranked 61st out of 100 countries in the world and 13th out of 25 countries in Asia in terms of mastery of English. This makes Indonesia occupy the lowest position when compared to neighboring countries, such as Singapore, the Philippines, Malaysia and Vietnam. Mastery of English cannot be done instantly. It takes consistent and continuous practice to be able to master English both actively and passively. Therefore, the process of learning English needs to be done as early as possible (Kusumawardani, 2021).

There are many languages in the world created by Allah. Allah said in the holy Quran, Ar-Ruum/30 verse 22 as follow

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَالْوَأْنِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ

لآيَاتٍ لِلْعَالِمِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

Since the majority of information is published in English, speaking English makes it simple to access and receive information. Because English serves as the language of science, technology, and business, this occurs. Education is the most effective technique for everyone to gain access to learning English. Students in Indonesia's primary schools (SD) start learning English as a foreign language as local and extracurricular topic subjects. The Republic of Indonesia (Depdikbud RI) policy No. 0487/1992, Chapter VIII, which states that elementary schools can add subjects to their curricula as long as those lessons do not conflict with national education goals, is the official policy regarding the inclusion of English lessons in elementary schools. Then, this policy was followed by the Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 060/U/1993 dated February 25, 1993 concerning the possibility of an English language program as a local elementary school content subject, and could start in grade 4 of SD (Kulsum, 2016).

Because of this, English is becoming increasingly popular as a subject in elementary schools. English as a foreign language in Indonesia has seen considerable advancements as elementary schools compete to use English in the classroom. Even kindergarten schools began to introduce English. Maili (2018) English is a source of pride for parents of students and advertising for schools. English-teaching institutions are seen as being more prestigious than institutions that do not offer English as a discipline (Mulyana, 2017). It is not surprising that parents tended to favor enrolling their kids in schools that provided English as a local content (Local content) topic in the early 2000s.

Real language learning is only done by children aged 6-7 years, when they start school. So, the development of language is an increase in the ability to master communication tools, both in spoken and written ways, as well as using signs and signals. Mastering communication tools here is defined as one's efforts to be able to understand and be understood by others (Fatimah, 2006). According to research done by a group of academics at McGill University in Canada, learning a second language is best done before pre-puberty (Gordon, 2007).

Given that kindergarten and elementary school students are in a time period known as the golden age and as well as a critical phase, when children may easily learn anything, teaching English to elementary level students is the right choice. Since their minds are still malleable during this time, infants can learn anything, even languages. Children's opinions regarding various

languages and cultures are also exposed, and these attitudes aid in language learning. In acquiring language, vocabulary as one of the areas of knowledge in language plays a big role for young learners. Linse stated that developing young learners' vocabulary is an important aspect of their language development (Nunan, 2005).

As long as the school feels that the addition of local content is pertinent and consistent with the environment, and as long as the school is capable of providing the necessary facilities related to learning materials and teachers to support English learning at the school, adding local English content to lessons can actually be given in elementary schools (Mulyana, 2017). Based on Permendiknas Number 22 of 2006 concerning Content Standards and Permendiknas Number 23 of 2006 concerning Graduate Competency Standards, English is one of the mandatory local content for all elementary school students from class I to class VI with the allotted learning time provided is 2 x 35 minutes of study hours per week (Kulsum, 2016). Even though English was once only taught in grades IV–VI, it is now taught in all courses beginning in grade I because to KTSP, which is present in practically all elementary schools in Indonesia. With the intention that students can master communication skills which include listening, speaking, reading and writing. As well as being able to communicate orally and in writing according to the context fluently and accurately in everyday life.

Having concluded from the theory above that there are several perspectives from schools on government policies regarding learning English in elementary school education, whether implementing English learning or not implementing it. So the response that the researcher want to take based on the results of interviews conducted by researchers with several school principals and English teachers at MIS Al-Hamid, MIN 5 Banjarmasin, and MIS Al-Furqon in policy No. 0487/1992 on chapter VIII of the ministry of education Indonesia regarding learning English for children in elementary schools. There are some school concerns about existing policies, so researchers are very interested in analyzing schools' perception of government policy toward the implementation of English language education in elementary schools and the advantages and the disadvantages from this policy.

B. Definition of Key Term

In order to make the title easier to understand and avoid mistakes in understanding the title above, the researcher will explain the terms contained in the title as follows:

1. Perception

The definition of perception is a person's response or process of knowing several things through his five senses. In this study, what is meant by perception is the response from schools regarding government policies regarding learning English in elementary schools.

2. School Policy

School policies are made by people who are elected to be responsible for making education policies, other elements of the school board are given the authority to make policies, both school principals, supervisors, administrators who have the authority to manage policies from the school board (Puspitasari, 2016).

3. Elementary School

Elementary school is basic education for children aged between 7 to 12 years as stated that "citizens aged 7 years must attend basic education" (Law number 20/2003 article 6 paragraph (1) concerning the National Education System). In this study, researchers took the perspective of several elementary schools.

C. Research Questions

Some questions that want to answer by this research are:

1. What is the schools' perception of government policy regarding the implementation of English language education in elementary schools?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of government policies regarding the implementation of English language education in elementary schools?

D. Objective of Study

1. To find out the schools' perception of government policies regarding the implementation of English language education in elementary schools.
2. To find out the advantages and disadvantages of government policies regarding the implementation of English language education in elementary schools.

E. Significances of Study

1. Theoretical, the results of this research can be a reference for researchers who research government policies
2. Practically, the results of this study will contribute to English language education in elementary schools.
3. This study provides information on how the implementation of English in elementary schools according to government policy.