

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

As an English education student studying in the field of education, I am shaped to become an educator who has a sense of concern and responsibility for the quality of education around me. The quality of education in Indonesia can still be said to be low at the national and international levels. According to Megawati and Sutarto (2021), the basic ability that can be seen from the low quality of education in Indonesia is numeracy literacy skills. Due to these conditions, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) issued the *Kampus Mengajar* program. The *Kampus Mengajar* program aims to provide opportunities for college students to sharpen 21st century competencies through learning development activities in primary and secondary education units that focus on improving literacy and numeracy as well as skills and strengthening character in primary and secondary students (Kemdikbud, 2023). Therefore, the *Kampus Mengajar* program can provide good benefits for both parties.

Through the *Kampus Mengajar* program, I am committed to helping improve literacy and numeracy skills by directly assisting educational units in Indonesia. Based on the placement results from the *Kampus Mengajar* team, I was placed in one of the primary schools located in Taraju District, Tasikmalaya Regency, West Java, Indonesia. After conducting observations in the first week through teaching assistance, my team and I discovered the phenomenon of low literacy skills among the students. According to Karimi et al. (2020), literacy is the ability to read, write, speak, listen, and communicate. Therefore, literacy also means social practices and relationships related to knowledge, language, and culture. In addition, my team and I found that the students needed to familiarize themselves with English as an international language. However, this is due to the need for more access for students to learn English, such as the absence of English subjects in schools and the absence of courses to learn English in the area. Meanwhile, in this era of globalization, English is the most important language to

master. According to Rao (2019), everyone needs to learn the English language to face the challenges in the global market. As English is a global language, teachers have the responsibility of spreading the teaching of English as a second language or a foreign language for the benefit of people. Therefore, my team and I designed an English learning program called English Zone.

English Zone is a program created as a means to introduce English to students in one of the schools located in Taraju District, Tasikmalaya Regency, West Java, Indonesia, during the *Kampus Mengajar* program. This program is a manifestation of literacy skill improvement, which is one of the goals of the *Kampus Mengajar* program. This is in line with the statement of Karimi et al. (2020), which states that literacy includes the ability to communicate using acceptable language. The English Zone program aims to introduce English as one of the world's communication tools and build students' literacy skills in foreign languages. The program is conducted outside the classroom with the aim of creating a new learning atmosphere so that students enjoy the English learning process. According to Septiyana et al. (2020), English Zone (EZO) is an activity where students or participants use English in a certain place all the time. This program is carried out once a week with a learning duration of sixty minutes in each meeting. As for the material taught to students, it is adjusted to the level of students' abilities because students in this primary school never had the opportunity to learn English.

Besides impacting students' English learning outcomes, this English Zone program also indirectly builds my professionalism as a prospective teacher. In this case, a teacher's professional development is defined as a process of professional formation as a prospective teacher from the experience of teaching English at the primary school level through the *Kampus Mengajar* program. According to Kurniawan et al. (2021), education, training, and teaching experience have a significant effect on teacher professionalism. The study results confirm that with a long teaching experience, teachers can hone their professional competencies better and manage to learn in the classroom.

This study examined my experience when teaching English in the English Zone program when I participated in the sixth batch of the *Kampus Mengajar* program. In line with that, there are several studies in line with my research. One of them is a study conducted by Hidayat and Patmisari (2023), which revealed that the *Kampus Mengajar* program and teaching experiences affected students' understanding of teacher professional competence. In addition, Suyatno et al. (2023) revealed that the *Kampus Mengajar* program provides real experience to probationary teachers by sharing experiences to improve their professionalism. However, both studies tend to focus on the general experience of participating in the *Kampus Mengajar* program. Meanwhile, in this study I focus on investigating my own experience as a participant in the sixth batch of the *Kampus Mengajar* program participant in teaching English facilitated by the English Zone program to support teachers' professional development.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

In this study, I examine the influence of my teaching experience on developing teacher professionalism as a prospective teacher. More specifically, the research question is, "How does teaching English experience during the *Kampus Mengajar* program builds my professionalism as a prospective teacher?"

1.3 Operational Definitions

1.3.1 Teacher Professional Development

Teacher professional development refers to continuous learning opportunities for student teachers by conducting some strategies that can improve their skills, knowledge, and competencies while conducting English Zone during participating in the sixth batch of the *Kampus Mengajar* program at a primary school.

1.3.2 Teaching Experience

The process of gaining knowledge and expertise in teaching English during the sixth batch of the *Kampus Mengajar* program facilitated by the English Zone program at the primary school level.

1.3.3 Student-Teacher

As seventh semester student-teachers' majoring in the English education department who participated in the sixth batch of *Kampus Mengajar* program and conducted English learning through English Zone during the program.

1.3.4 English Zone

A program created by the student teacher to promote English learning for the sixth-grade students in the sixth batch of the *Kampus Mengajar* program. This program was an extracurricular activity which was conducted once a week to give opportunities for the students to learn English especially to enrich their vocabulary mastery.

1.4 Aim of the Study

My study aims to investigate how my teaching English experiences at the primary school level can support my teacher's professional development during the sixth batch of the *Kampus Mengajar* program.

1.5 Significance of the Study

1.5.1 Theoretical Significance

My research will enrich the literature review related to teaching experience and teacher's professional development, especially in the student-teacher's teaching experience and teacher's professionalism while teaching English in primary schools during the sixth batch of the *Kampus Mengajar* program.

1.5.2 Practical Significance

My research will be an additional input as a reference for student- teachers' in teaching English at primary school who do not have teaching experience to construct their teacher professional development.

1.5.3 Empirical Significance

My research will show an empirical understanding of how an English student teacher's experiences develop her teacher's professionalism in teaching English during the sixth batch of the *Kampus Mengajar* program at primary school level.