

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Teaching English to young learners is challenging since each student has unique characteristics. This statement is closely related to the characteristics of young learners, as said by Pinter (2017), they understand messages but cannot yet analyze language because they holistically learn language. They are less conscious of the language learning process and themselves as language learners. Their reading and writing skills are nonexistent or limited even in their tongue. In general, they care more about themselves than others, do not know much about the outside world, and enjoy movement, imagination, and fantasy. These characteristics are a challenge for teachers when teaching English in class. As said by Lynce (2008, as cited in Fajaryani et al., 2018), there are three challenges in teaching and learning English in the classroom. The first is lack of motivation, the second is insufficient time, resources, and materials, and the last is over-crowded classes. Teachers must overcome these three challenges to improve the quality of English teaching in the classroom. Additionally, because the teacher works critically, she must continuously develop to provide the young learners with high-quality language input. To ensure that students can utilize English for everyday conversation in the future, teachers should be able to pique students' interest in the language and make the topic enjoyable. These challenges should make teachers more enthusiastic about doing their work. To be successful, teachers must be patient in dealing with students who do not yet speak English.

Some previous research has been conducted on challenges in teaching English to young learners. Khulel (2021) said that teachers face three challenges when teaching English to young learners. The first is teachers' obstacles to students' socioeconomic status. The second one is teachers' concerns about the place of English in the national curriculum. And the last is the teachers' challenge in the Covid-19 pandemic. On the other hand, Pertiwi et al (2022) also said that

the deep challenges of teaching English arise only from students, such as the lack of student motivation towards English language learning, students' lack of knowledge of English, a negative perception of English, and lack speaking courage which makes teachers have to be extra careful in teaching English in the classroom and should apply learning methods as interesting as possible. The research gap in this research lies in the location of the research and data collection techniques, whereas previous research only used interviews to collect the data. Also, the research location was in a small district and rural areas. To fill this gap, this research aims to find out the challenges English teachers face and the solutions provided by teachers who teach English in elementary schools in the city. It will add observations to collect the data. So, with different locations and data collection techniques, it will produce more varied data and be a differentiator from previous research.

## **1.2 Formulation of the Problem**

- 1.2.1** What challenges are faced by English teachers in teaching English to young learners?
- 2.2.1** How do teachers overcome those challenges?

### 1.3 Operational Definitions

- 1.3.1 Teaching English as a Foreign Language** : Teaching English as a foreign language is teaching English to students whose first language is not English, and is not used in everyday life.
- 1.3.2 Young Learners** : Young learners are those who are in pre-school to secondary school with an age range of 5-12 years. The young learners in this research are those in the elementary school with an age range of 5-12 years.
- 1.3.3 Teaching English to Young Learners** : Teaching English to young learners refers to the process of imparting English skills, knowledge, and information to children between the ages of 5 and 12, who are at a critical stage of language development and can change and redefine their thinking in everyday life as foreign language learners.

### 1.4 Aim of the Study

This research aims to determine the challenges faced by English teachers in elementary schools in Tasikmalaya city and the solutions that each teacher will provide to solve existing problems.

### 1.5 Significance of the Study

#### 1.5.1 Theoretical Use

This research will enrich the knowledge of teachers about teaching young learners and provide experiences to overcome the challenges that will be faced in teaching English in the classroom.

### **1.5.2 Practical Use**

This research is expected to be used as a reference for teachers and the researchers, to find out what challenges will be faced in teaching English to young learners.

### **1.5.3 Empirical Use**

This research produces empirical data on the challenges faced by teachers when teaching English to young learners and solutions to overcome existing challenges.