

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

In the context of English language teaching in Indonesia, the use of English during the learning process is a crucial aspect that determines the quality of classroom interaction and students' learning outcomes. One approach considered effective is the use of English in the classroom, which occurs when teachers consistently use English as the primary medium of communication in the classroom. This practice can provide students with linguistic exposure necessary to develop their communicative competence (Hall & Cook, 2012). This is particularly relevant because English is a foreign language in Indonesia, so the learning process in the classroom becomes the consistent place for students to be exposed to and practise using English. The Merdeka Curriculum policy also emphasizes the importance of using English in learning to create communicative and practice-based learning experiences (Kemendikbud, 2022). Therefore, student teachers' ability to consistently use English during teaching practice is crucial to ensure that students receive adequate linguistic exposure.

Despite this importance, EFL student teachers in Indonesia still face significant challenges in maintaining consistent use of the English during teaching practice. One of the main challenges that arises is anxiety when speaking. Abrar et al. (2022) found that student teachers in a teacher education program at a public university in Jambi reported high levels of foreign language speaking anxiety. Similarly, Afiqoh et al. (2024) identified sources of anxiety among student teachers at an Islamic junior high school, including classroom interaction, teaching materials, and fear of making mistakes. These findings indicate that emotional readiness, not just linguistic competence, is a crucial factor in determining how consistently student teachers use English in classroom instruction.

Another challenge in EFL classrooms is the prevalence of code-switching and translanguaging. Suryarini (2022) reported that teachers often use Indonesian

when explaining complex grammar points or giving instructions to ensure comprehension, while limiting code-switching in other parts of the lesson to maintain English exposure. Karima et al. (2025) observed that translanguaging is commonly used strategically to clarify difficult concepts, although balancing this practice with maximizing English input remains challenging. These findings highlight the need for careful management between bilingual strategies that support comprehension and the consistent use of English to promote language acquisition.

Furthermore, the conditions in teaching internship schools also significantly influence the use of English. At a junior high school in Tasikmalaya, which serves as the context for this study, student teachers face challenges such as students' varying English proficiency, mentoring teachers' tendency to prioritize material comprehension, and classroom dynamics that often necessitate the use of Indonesian language to maintain teaching effectiveness. These conditions create a gap between the ideal of consistently using English and the realities in the field, making it difficult for student teachers to sustain English use during their teaching internship.

Although previous research has shown that consistent use of English can improve students' communicative competence and enhance learning outcomes, studies specifically examining how student teachers use English during teaching internship at the junior high school level remain very limited. Madani et al. (2023) highlighted strategies teachers employ to maximize English use, such as gestures, slower speech, and simplified grammar to ensure student comprehension. Similarly, Korkmaz (2021) found that prospective teachers value maximum exposure to English but still rely on L1 for complex instructions or classroom management to maintain student understanding. Therefore, this study is necessary to fill the gap by investigating student teachers' perceptions toward the use of English during their teaching internship at junior high schools in Tasikmalaya. Understanding student teachers' perceptions is important because their perceptions influence their readiness, confidence, and decisions in using English during classroom instruction, which are essential aspects of their professional development as future English teachers. This study aims to contribute theoretically by providing insight for

universities, teacher educators, and mentor teachers in improving student teachers' preparation, and empirically by offering real evidence that can serve as a reference for the future research on student teachers' classroom practices.

B. Formulation of the Problem

What are the perceptions of Indonesian EFL student teachers toward the use of English during their teaching internship program?

C. Operational Definitions

For the sake of accuracy and better understanding, the important terms used in this research are clarified below:

1. The Use of English : It refers to the use of English by Indonesian EFL student teachers during classroom instruction in junior high schools. This includes using English for giving instructions, explanations, feedback, and classroom interactions to facilitate students' exposure and engagement in the English learning process.
2. Student Teachers : It is Pre-service English education students who are undertaking a teaching internship at partner schools and consistently use English in their teaching practice.
3. Teaching Internship Program : It is a program or teaching practice organized by FKIP, where English education students are placed in partner schools for 3 months to apply pedagogical theories, teaching skills, and consistently use English in authentic classroom contexts.
4. Perceptions : It refers to student teachers' views and interpretations of the use of English during teaching internship program. In this study, perceptions are explored from three aspects based on the tripartite model of attitude proposed by Rosenberg and Hovland (1960).

D. Aim of the Study

This study aims to investigate Indonesian EFL student teachers' perceptions of the use of English during their teaching internship program.

E. Significances of the Study

This study is expected to provide several significant contributions, both theoretically, practically, and empirically:

1. Theoretical Significance

This research will enrich the literature on English student teachers' perceptions of using English during teaching internships. It provides a clearer understanding of how student teachers perceive the use of English during their teaching internship, which is still rarely discussed in the Indonesian context.

2. Practical Significance

The results of this study will provide useful insights for universities, teacher educators, and mentor teachers in improving the preparation and mentoring of student teachers. By understanding what helps or hinders student teachers in using English, institutions can design better training and support to encourage more consistent use of English in real classrooms.

3. Empirical Significance

This research will provide real evidence about how student teachers perceive and use English during the teaching internship program. The results can serve as a reference for future researchers interested in using English or student teacher practices in Indonesian EFL settings.