

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

This section serves as an introduction to the research. In the research background, the researcher discusses the study's focus, which centres on teachers' strategies and challenges in enhancing students' Montessori based bilingualism at a private bilingual pre-school in Yogyakarta. The problem identification section outlines the challenges in Indonesian preschools, especially in terms of bilingual Montessori schools. The research delimitation defines the study's scope, specifically focusing on the perspectives of teachers in a private preschool adopting the Montessori approach in Yogyakarta. Additionally, this chapter includes the research questions, objectives of the research, significance of the research, and the organization of the chapters.

### **The Background of the Research**

Early childhood education (ECE) plays a vital role in shaping the future of the world. Early childhood education refers to both structured and informal environments of children's education during their pre-school years (Negussie, 2021). It includes the promotion of activities to support the initial cognitive, physical, social, and emotional growth of the children (UNESCO, 2012).

The principles in early childhood education, as defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), encompass a commitment to individualized and developmentally appropriate instruction, a focus on social and emotional well-being, the establishment of strong partnerships among educators, families, and the community, and an emphasis on play-based learning, cultural responsiveness, and active child participation in educational processes (NAEYC, 2009). Moreover, these principles find resonance with the Montessori educational philosophy, founded on the idea that children naturally possess

curiosity and intrinsic motivation for learning, and the environment is thoughtfully arranged to promote independence, critical thinking, and the development of practical life skills (Montessori, 2004).

Due to globalization, the emphasis on enhancing bilingualism in childhood education has become more prominent (Matea, 2020). According to Winnefeld (2012), Montessori approach can support bilingual education with collaboration of other approaches that may support effective and impactful learning. Handayani (2014) stated, Montessori approaches support and encourage students' freedom of expression without the fear of being wrong, and therefore support their language learning.

The popularity of Montessori education in Indonesian preschools was proven effective in teaching the English language (Widiyanti et al., 2018). These successes of the Montessori teaching approach cannot be separated from the role of its teacher, as stated by Suharyat et al. (2022), teacher is required to have a well-planned strategy when using the Montessori approach, emphasizing a systematic use of teaching methods. According to Adisti (2018), teachers also face challenges in applying Montessori's principles to teaching English because of the distinctive complexity of instructing a foreign language, especially within the specialized domain of Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL).

The Montessori approach, which has demonstrated efficacy in enhancing students' bilingualism and fostering children's development, highlights a persistent gap among teacher (Yulia et al., 2022). This gap is particularly notable in the preschool domain, where a nuanced comprehension of the Montessori concept remains lacking. Drawing on this evidence and the researcher's experience observing the positive impacts of Montessori approach implementation in Yogyakarta's preschool education—specifically in advancing children's critical thinking, communication, and creativity—the researcher believes that

understanding the right strategies and challenges of Montessori approaches can be beneficial for promoting children's bilingualism and addressing existing gaps.

### **Identification of Problems**

In the Indonesian early childhood education (ECE) landscape, a critical concern emerges due to the insufficient support for fostering bilingualism within the Montessori approach. The acquisition of language, particularly the nurturing of bilingualism, holds paramount significance in early childhood education as it underpins cognitive development, facilitates effective communication, and cultivates critical thinking skills. Nevertheless, instructing students through this method presents challenges, as many educators may lack a comprehensive understanding of how to effectively enhance students' bilingual abilities within the Montessori framework.

The limitations of guidelines for promoting bilingualism through the Montessori method in early childhood education also can present challenges for teachers. Without clear direction tailored specifically to bilingual education within Montessori settings, teachers may encounter obstacles in fostering a comprehensive and inclusive linguistic environment that effectively supports the diverse needs of young learners.

Moreover, the lack of sufficient resources about enhancing students' bilingualism through the Montessori approach also presents a significant challenge for teachers, hindering their ability to create enriching bilingual learning environments and address the diverse linguistic needs of their students effectively.

These problems need to be investigated, especially with understanding the teachers' strategies and the teachers' perspectives on the challenges when implementing the Montessori approach to encourage bilingualism in early childhood education (ECE).

Therefore, the researcher intended to conduct research on teacher strategies and challenges in enhancing bilingualism through Montessori in one of the bilingual preschools in Yogyakarta.

## **Delimitation of the Problem**

To enhance the research's value, the study's scope is delimited. The research exclusively concentrates on two specific aspects: first, the study explores teachers' strategies in enhancing students' bilingualism through Montessori approach at a private bilingual pre-school in Yogyakarta. This encompasses the various methods utilized within the Montessori approach for the purpose of promoting bilingualism. Second, the research examined teachers' challenges in implementing the Montessori approach to enhance students' bilingualism at a private bilingual pre-school in Yogyakarta. These challenges encompass the difficulties teachers face while instructing students using the Montessori approach to promote bilingualism. The aim of enhancing bilingualism for students is to improve their language skills, with a particular focus on proficiency in two languages: Indonesian and English. The study was conducted at one of the private bilingual preschools in Yogyakarta that utilizes Montessori approaches in its curriculum. Additionally, this research used a qualitative research approach.

## **Research Questions**

In this research, two research questions are proposed. These questions are as follows:

1. What are the strategies used in enhancing students' bilingualism through Montessori approach in early childhood education (ECE)?
2. What are the challenges in implementing the Montessori approach to enhance students' bilingualism on early childhood education (ECE)?

## **The Objectives of the Research**

Based on the research questions, the objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To understand the strategies used in enhancing students' bilingualism through Montessori approach in early childhood education (ECE).

2. To understand the teachers' perspective in the challenges in implementing Montessori approach to enhance bilingualism on early childhood education (ECE).

### **The Significance of the Research**

The outcomes of this research are expected to provide insights to various fields, including teachers, institutions, and future researchers.

#### ***For Teachers***

This study is expected to serve as a valuable reference for teachers, enabling them to integrate Montessori approaches into their teaching to enhance students' bilingualism while acknowledging the challenges overcome. Furthermore, it has the potential to offer insights into designing highly effective learning environments that may yield positive outcomes for students.

#### ***For Institutions***

This research is expected to serve as a valuable resource for institutions, providing insights to establish proper curriculum and guidelines for their teaching force based on teachers' strategies and challenges in enhancing students' bilingualism through Montessori approaches.

#### ***For Future Researchers***

This research is expected to utilize the findings of this study, which focus on teacher strategies and challenges in enhancing students' bilingualism through Montessori, to serve as a valuable point of reference for future research endeavors aiming to explore the same subject matter, or from different perspectives.

## **Organization of the Chapters**

In the opening chapter of this research, there are six sections, each with a specific purpose. It begins with the "Background of Research," explaining the concept and rationale behind the chosen topic. Then, the "Identification of the Problem" section addresses the relevant challenges. Next, the "Delimitation of Research" section sets boundaries and scope. The "Research Questions" section presents core inquiries, while the "Objectives of the Research" segment outlines goals. Highlighting importance, the "Significance of Research" section emphasizes its contribution. Finally, the "Organization of the Research" section offers a brief overview of the study's structure.

Chapter two, entitled "Literature Review," is split into three sections, each with a specific aim. Initially, it delves into established theories pertinent to the research, offering a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical underpinnings related to the study. Following that, it examines previous research undertaken by field experts, presenting insights from earlier studies that bear relevance to the research topic. Lastly, the chapter introduces conceptual frameworks illustrating the problem under scrutiny, laying the groundwork for the study's exploration.

Chapter three, entitled 'Methodology,' consists of six parts, each contributing to the research methodology. Firstly, it explains the chosen research design. Secondly, it provides insights into the research settings. The third part outlines the research participants and the sampling process. The fourth part details the data collection method. The fifth part focuses on the research instrument. Lastly, the sixth part addresses data analysis methodology.

Chapter four, entitled "Findings and Discussions," reveals the results and explores the outcomes of the data analysis. This section provides a detailed presentation of the findings along with an analysis of the data.

Chapter five, entitled "Conclusion and Recommendations," offers conclusions and suggestions. It provides responses to the research questions and recommendations aimed at teachers, institutions, and future researchers, concluding the study.