

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses “Integrating Stoic Philosophy in English Language Teaching of the First Grade at MTsN 8 Blitar: Enhancing Students Resilience and Emotional Balance.” It presents the foundational components of the research, including the background of the study, research problems and questions, research objectives and aims, the significance of the research, the scope and limitation of the study, and the definition of key terms. This chapter introduces key theoretical and contextual elements that frame the study, including the relevance of Stoic philosophy, the emotional challenges in language learning, and the cultural context of MTsN 8 Blitar. By outlining these components, this chapter provides a clear understanding of the study’s rationale, direction, and intended contributions to English language teaching and emotional development.

A. Background of the Study

In the field of education, the development of students’ emotional and psychological well-being has become as essential as their academic achievement. Emotional intelligence (EI),¹ refers to the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one’s own emotions, an essential skill for academic and social success in educational settings. Which confirms that EI plays a vital role in managing stress, sustaining motivation, and enhancing engagement in learning environments.²

¹ John D. Mayer., Peter Salovey, and David R. Caruso, *Emotional Intelligence: From Theory to Practice 2nd ed.* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2022)

² Peter Qualter et al., “Trait Emotional Intelligence Predicts Academic Achievement and Well-Being: A Meta-Analytic Review,” *Journal of Educational Psychology* 113, no. 8 (2021): 1561–1582, ; Moshe Zeidner, Gerald Matthews, and Richard D. Roberts, *What We Know about Emotional*

In the context of English language teaching (ELT), students often face emotional obstacles such as anxiety, frustration, and fear of failure, which can hinder their ability to effectively acquire and use a new language.³ These emotional challenges can be particularly pronounced in adolescent learners, who are still developing their emotional regulation skills.

One promising approach to address these challenges is the integration of Stoic philosophy into the language learning process. Stoicism, a Hellenistic philosophy founded in the 3rd century BCE, emphasizes emotional resilience, self-control, and rational thinking. The core Stoic principle of focusing on what is within one's control and accepting what is beyond it offers practical tools for managing stress and frustration.⁴ According to modern Stoic scholars, such as Pigliucci (2017), Stoicism can serve as a form of cognitive therapy, helping individuals cultivate a calm and rational mindset, which is essential for navigating life's challenges, including the stress associated with learning.⁵ This is further supported by recent educational psychology studies emphasizing rational reflection as a method for emotional regulation.⁶

Intelligence: How It Affects Learning, Work, Relationships, and Our Mental Health (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009)

³ Elaine K. Horwitz, "Language Anxiety: From Theory and Research to Classroom Implications," *Language Teaching* 33 (2001): 1–14. ; Jean-Marc Dewaele and Chaoying Li, "Emotions in Foreign Language Learning: From Learner Perspectives to Teacher Practices," *The Language Learning Journal* 48, no. 1 (2020): 4–14. ; Yasser Teimouri, J. Goetze, and Luke Plonsky, "Second Language Anxiety and Achievement: A Meta-Analysis," *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 41, no. 2 (2019): 363–387.

⁴ William B. Irvine, *A Guide to the Good Life: The Ancient Art of Stoic Joy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). ; Donald Robertson, *Stoicism and the Art of Happiness* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2019).

⁵ Massimo Pigliucci, *How to Be a Stoic: Using Ancient Philosophy to Live a Modern Life* (New York: Basic Books, 2017).

⁶ Jesus Alfonso D. Datu, "Positive Psychology in Asian Education," *Asia-Pacific Education Researcher* 30, no. 1 (2021): 1–10

The relevance of Stoic philosophy to modern education is gaining attention, especially in the teaching of resilience and emotional balance. Stoic practices, such as negative visualization (imagining worst-case scenarios to diminish fear) and the dichotomy of control (recognizing what we can and cannot influence), provide students with cognitive tools to manage their emotions in stressful situations.⁷ These practices align with the goals of emotional intelligence education, which seeks to develop students' ability to regulate their emotions and respond to challenges in a constructive manner.⁸

In the specific context of ELT, incorporating Stoic teachings could provide dual benefits. First, Stoic ideas can help students better manage the emotional aspects of language learning, such as fear of making mistakes or the frustration of slow progress. By internalizing the Stoic principle that failure is a natural part of growth and focusing on effort rather than outcomes, students may become more resilient and persistent in their studies.⁹ Second, Stoicism encourages reflection and self-awareness, which can enhance students' engagement with the learning material and foster a deeper understanding of the language.

At MTsN 8 Blitar, a first grade junior high school in Indonesia, students are in a critical stage of their emotional and cognitive development. The integration of Stoic philosophy into English language teaching at this stage could provide a powerful

⁷ Donald Robertson, *Stoicism and the Art of Happiness* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2019). ; Lea Waters, *The Strength Switch: How the New Science of Strength-Based Parenting Can Help Your Child and Your Teen to Flourish* (New York: Avery, 2017).

⁸ Moshe Zeidner et al, *What We Know about Emotional Intelligence: How It Affects Learning, Work, Relationships, and Our Mental Health* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009). ; Reinhard Pekrun et al., "The Control-Value Theory of Achievement Emotions: An Update," *Emotion Review* 9, no. 3 (2017): 271–278.

⁹ Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995). ; Jesus Alfonso D. Datu, "Positive Psychology in Asian Education," *Asia-Pacific Education Researcher* 30, no. 1 (2021): 1–10

framework for fostering both linguistic proficiency and emotional resilience. The school's context as an Islamic educational institution also adds an interesting dimension, as both Stoicism and Islamic teachings emphasize self-control, ethical behavior, and acceptance of life's challenges. This research explore how these philosophical principles can be harmonized in an educational setting to enhance student outcomes.

Previous studies have explored various psychological and pedagogical approaches to support students' emotional well-being in language learning. Affective Filter Hypothesis highlights how emotional factors like anxiety and lack of confidence can impede language acquisition.¹⁰ Research school-based emotional learning interventions significantly improve student performance and well-being.¹¹ Additionally, Stoic principles have been examined in educational settings, with Gill demonstrating that Stoicism enhances emotional resilience among students.¹² Stoic techniques, such as reframing negative thoughts, are effective in helping learners manage stress and frustration.¹³

Building upon these studies, this research was implemented Stoic philosophy in a practical classroom context by integrating Stoic values into English Language Teaching (ELT) through reflective journaling, the use of Stoic control circles (to distinguish controllable and uncontrollable emotional triggers), classroom discussion of Stoic

¹⁰ Stephen D. Krashen, *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1982).

¹¹ Rebecca D. Taylor, Eva Oberle, and Roger P. Weissberg, "Promoting Positive Youth Development Through School-Based Social and Emotional Learning Interventions: A Meta-Analysis of Follow-Up Effects," *Child Development* 88, no. 4 (2017): 1156–1171; Jesus Alfonso D. Datu, "Positive Psychology in Asian Education," *Asia-Pacific Education Researcher* 30, no. 1 (2021): 1–10

¹² Christopher Gill, "Stoicism and Emotional Resilience in Educational Settings," *Philosophy of Education Review* 32, no. 1 (2017): 23–35.

¹³ Donald Robertson, *Stoicism and the Art of Happiness* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2019).

maxims, and teacher-guided emotional reframing techniques. These tools were embedded in standard English learning activities such as speaking practice and self-introduction exercises, especially those that naturally provoke anxiety or fear of failure.

In my view, Stoic philosophy offers valuable tools for enhancing emotional resilience and reducing anxiety in the language classroom. Stoic principles, such as distinguishing between what is controllable and what is not or (Dichotomy of Control), align closely with theories of emotional intelligence, which emphasize the importance of emotional regulation in academic achievement.¹⁴ By incorporating these practices into ELT, students can better manage the emotional challenges that naturally arise in language learning. The implementation involves designing lesson plans that incorporate Stoic principles, training teachers to model emotional control and rational thinking, and providing students with strategies to handle fear, and frustration in a structured and reflective way. Students were encouraged to journal their emotional experiences after each lesson and reflect on their reactions using Stoic logic (e.g., “What can I control in this situation?”)

While the primary focus of this study is on enhancing emotional resilience and emotional balance, it also considers how these emotional strengths may positively influence students’ motivation and engagement. Motivation is not treated as a separate variable but as a potential outcome that emerges when students experience greater emotional stability and self-regulation in their language learning journey.

¹⁴ John D. Mayer et al, *Emotional Intelligence: From Theory to Practice, 2nd ed.* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2022)

Through qualitative methods such as classroom observations, student journals, and interviews with teachers and students, this research aims to uncover how Stoic philosophy can be not only introduced but also sustained meaningfully in an Islamic junior high school context to promote more resilient, emotionally balanced, and motivated English learners.

In this research, Stoic philosophy was implemented through structured classroom practices. The implementation involve designing and using Stoic-integrated lesson plans that include activities such as reflective journaling, Stoic circle analysis (to distinguish controllable vs uncontrollable factors), and guided discussions about emotional regulation in learning.

Teachers was guided students to reflect on their emotional responses and reframe them using Stoic logic. For example, when facing public speaking anxiety in English class, students was taught to focus on their preparation (what they can control), rather than worrying about peer judgment (which is uncontrollable). These Stoic methods waembedded in everyday ELT activities, making philosophical practice directly relevant to language learning contexts.

Despite the potential benefits, there is limited research on the application of Stoic philosophy in English Language Teaching (ELT), particularly in non-Western and Islamic educational contexts. Most recent studies on emotional resilience and regulation in education tend to emphasize psychological interventions such as social-emotional learning (SEL) programs or mindfulness-based practices.¹⁵

¹⁵ Rebecca D. Taylor et al, "Promoting Positive Youth Development Through School-Based Social and Emotional Learning Interventions: A Meta-Analysis of Follow-Up Effects," *Child Development* 88, no. 4 (2017): 1156–1171 ; Christina Cipriano, Tricia N. Barnes, and Susan E. Rivers, "Social

While these approaches have demonstrated effectiveness, they often lack a philosophical or virtue-based foundation. Therefore, this study seeks to address a gap in the literature by exploring how Stoic principles can be practically integrated into ELT to support students' emotional development in culturally grounded ways.¹⁶

B. Research Problem and Question

At MTsN 8 Blitar, many students face significant emotional challenges, such as anxiety and frustration, that negatively impact their ability to learn English effectively. Traditional teaching methods may not adequately equip these students with the emotional resilience needed to cope with the challenges of language acquisition. Furthermore, there is limited knowledge about how Stoic philosophy can be integrated into the English language curriculum, despite its potential to enhance emotional balance and resilience.

The effects of incorporating Stoic principles on student motivation and classroom engagement have not been sufficiently explored, and the cultural context of MTsN 8 Blitar raises questions about the relevance and effectiveness of Stoic philosophy for improving students' emotional well-being and academic performance. Therefore, based on the research problems, the research question are formulated in the following :

1. How does Stoic Philosophy be integrated into English Language Teaching of First grade at MTsN 8 Blitar to enhance students' emotional resilience and emotional balance?

and Emotional Learning in Schools: Recent Trends and Future Directions,” *Educational Psychologist* 58, no. 2 (2023): 73–89

¹⁶ Joseph A. Durlak, Roger P. Weissberg, and Allison B. Dymnicki, “The Impact of Enhancing Students’ Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions,” *Child Development* 82, no. 1 (2011): 405–432.

2. How does the integration of Stoic principles influence students emotional resilience and emotional balance in English language teaching of First grade at MTsN 8 Blitar?

C. Research Objective

In order to address the research question, this study formulates the following objectives. These objectives are designed to guide the integration of Stoic philosophy into English Language Teaching (ELT) at MTsN 8 Blitar, with a primary focus on enhancing students' emotional resilience and emotional balance, and on observing any additional outcomes that may emerge during the process. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To explore how the integration of Stoic philosophy enhances students' emotional resilience and emotional balance within the context of English Language Teaching.
2. To explore how the integration of Stoic philosophical principles affects students' Emotional Resilience and Balance during English Language Teaching.

D. Research Aims

This study aims to explore and evaluate the integration of Stoic philosophy into English Language Teaching at MTsN 8 Blitar as a means of enhancing students' emotional resilience and emotional balance, while also identifying any additional outcomes, including impacts on motivation and engagement.

E. Significance of the Research

This research explores the integration of Stoic philosophy into English Language Teaching (ELT) at MTsN 8 Blitar, aiming to enhance students' emotional resilience and emotional balance. In the context of language learning, students often face emotional

challenges such as anxiety, frustration, and fear of failure, which can hinder their learning process. Stoic philosophy, with its focus on emotional control, rational acceptance, and resilience, is proposed as an approach to help students manage these emotional challenges, thereby creating a more stable and positive learning environment. This study not only focuses on the academic aspects of language learning but also on character development, through the application of Stoic principles, which are expected to strengthen students' emotional resilience in the face of learning challenges.

1. For Students:

This research focuses on enhancing emotional resilience and emotional balance in students, helping them manage anxiety and fear in language learning. By applying Stoic principles, students can develop the ability to stay motivated and engaged in the English language learning process, while also overcoming emotional barriers such as fear of failure and frustration.

2. For Teachers:

For teachers, this research provides a practical pedagogical framework that allows them to integrate Stoic principles into English language teaching. Through strategies like reflective journaling and emotional reframing, teachers can support students' emotional development, helping them manage stress and anxiety while fostering a positive, supportive classroom environment. These strategies offer teachers accessible tools for addressing the emotional barriers students face in learning.

3. For Future Researchers:

For future researchers, this study opens opportunities to explore the integration of Stoicism in language teaching, particularly in non-Western and Islamic educational contexts. Researchers can investigate the relationship between emotional resilience and second language acquisition, as well as how Stoic principles can be adapted to support students' emotional and academic development. This research also encourages further exploration of how ancient philosophy can be integrated into modern educational practices.

4. For Academic:

Academically, this research makes a significant theoretical contribution by linking Stoicism with emotional intelligence and the affective filter hypothesis, expanding our understanding of the role of emotional resilience in second language learning. It also proposes an innovative pedagogical framework that integrates emotional regulation with language teaching, enriching the discourse on affective factors in language education and contributing to the development of more humanistic, value-driven pedagogies in education.

F. Scope and Delimitation of the Research

This study is conducted at MTsN 8 Blitar, focusing on a two seventh-grade English language classroom. The scope of the research is limited to the design, implementation, and analysis of Stoic-integrated instructional strategies such as reflective journaling, Stoic control circle analysis, and guided emotional reframing within English

Language Teaching (ELT) speaking activities, particularly in the thematic context of “Introduction Myself.” The research specifically investigates how selected Stoic principles such as the dichotomy of control, emotional regulation, and rational reflection can foster students’ emotional resilience and emotional balance. Although motivation and engagement are also observed, they are treated as emergent outcomes rather than core variables of the study.

The study is delimited in several important ways. First, it is confined to one teacher and two seventh-grade class, using a qualitative case study approach to allow for deep, context-sensitive analysis of emotional and behavioral changes. This design choice limits statistical generalization but enables a rich, detailed understanding of students’ responses to Stoic practices within a specific educational and cultural context. Second, the implementation period is limited to three weeks, which constrains long-term observation but allows for focused and manageable integration of Stoic strategies into ELT lessons. Third, this study does not aim to compare Stoic methods with other psychological interventions such as mindfulness or SEL programs, but rather to explore Stoicism as a philosophically grounded and culturally adaptable pedagogical framework within Islamic educational settings.

Lastly, the philosophical nature of Stoicism, while promising, may not be fully internalized by all students during the short intervention window, especially given their developmental stage and linguistic level. However, the primary aim is to observe whether meaningful emotional insights and behavioral shifts can begin to emerge when Stoic principles are embedded into the language learning process.

G. Definition of Key Terms

Stoicism : refers not only to the ancient philosophy but specifically to its principles (such as emotional regulation, acceptance of challenges, and focusing on what is within one's control) as implemented through instructional strategies within the English language teaching context. These strategies include reflective exercises, guided discussions, and cognitive reframing techniques designed for Integration during the learning process.

Emotional Resilience : The capacity of students to manage and recover from emotional challenges, stress, or adversity, particularly anxiety and frustration, during the process of learning English. In this study, emotional resilience is an intended outcome to be observed, developed through Stoic-based learning strategies facilitated by the teacher.

Emotional Balance : A state of emotional stability where negative emotions such as stress or anxiety are effectively managed by students. This balance refers to the achievement of a calm and focused mindset during English language learning, which is actively facilitated through pedagogical interventions and classroom activities that integrate Stoic principles.

English Language Teaching (ELT) in MTsN 8 Blitar : This refers to the curriculum and teaching practices of English at MTsN 8 Blitar, which, in this research, are specifically integrated with instructional strategies based on Stoic philosophy. The focus is on how existing teaching methods are modified to incorporate elements aimed at enhancing students' resilience and emotional balance.