

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is designed for the reason on leading the research and it consists of several points: background, a research question, objectives of the study, theoretical framework, significance of the study, scope, and limitation of the study and definition of key terms as expanded in the following sections.

Background

In learning English, students are expected to achieve the goals of the learning process. The goals of learning should be set by the teachers when planning the lesson. However, some English teachers still do not prepare the materials properly when they come into the classroom. They only come, teach, and give the task without giving a memorable lesson to the students during the teaching-learning process. Therefore, there are still many students who fail in the English examination because of their lack of understanding of the materials that are given by teachers. Due to those situations, the researcher believes that the method and technique employed in the classrooms to teach English have a big impact on student's English comprehension. Based on that phenomenon, it is important for teachers to realize what their students need in the teaching-learning process, so they can achieve the goal that has been set.

A new teacher in the field of education usually contributes many innovations in achieving the goals during the teaching-learning process. They are young, energetic, and come with the fresh knowledge and strategies, which are full of creativity and can be implemented to the learning process. They are expected to change the paradigm that English is a boring lesson. Through effective and efficient teaching methods, these new teachers will create different impressions and have a positive impact on students.

There are many creative strategies to teach their students. One of the common strategies used in language teaching is group work. Through group work, students will have the opportunity to work together with the peers around them and they will try to solve the

problem together as a group. The benefits of working in a group are immense as it allows both high and low academic achievers to learn from each other, as well as listen and compare different perspectives, ideas, and thoughts. On the other hand, young learners are a group of learners who are very different from adult learners in many aspects. This strategy is commonly used for secondary and university students and it helps both teacher and students during the teaching-learning process as well. What is still questionable is whether group work is suitable for teaching English young learners or not. Even though some said that using group work to teach young learners is impossible, others argued that it is possible and even beneficial to implement group work for teaching English to young learners.

Children and adults are different in learning something because their experience to learn is also totally different. The matter of group work implementation in teaching young learners was being debated. Scott and Ytreberg (1990) stated that young learners like to play and work alone. They also stated that children are reluctant to share, which was called as self-centered. It becomes a consideration for teachers when they will use group work in the class. In a real condition, some of the young learners' teachers stated that they need extra power to make young learners work together in group work. Meanwhile, another study found that group work can be part of the productive part of classroom activity (Blatchford, Galton, Kutnick, Baines, 2005). It was very beneficial for pupils, as they will be more independent in solving their own problem with their classmates.

The pupils will grow to become adult students as time goes by. They need to be introduced to the importance of communication through working in a group (Raja, 2012). Ahmed (2013) also found that group work is one of the fundamental aspects of SLA learners and teachers. What the researchers stated above are some findings that support positively to the use of group work in the teaching-learning process. All the learning strategies including group-work will be worth if the teacher pays attention to the rules of those strategies

According to the evidence above, the researcher will conduct research about The implementation of group work in teaching English to young learners. The researcher will conduct an investigation of the teachers' perceptions towards the implementation of group work in teaching English to young learners. Sugino (1994) found some teachers worry that students might start speaking in Japanese during group work or pick up ungrammatical forms. It also becomes one of the difficulties or problem during group work.

Research Questions

The facts and problems that have been explained above is the base for the following research question "What are teachers' perceptions towards the implementation of group work in teaching English to young learners?"

Objectives of the Study

This study has the purpose to investigate the teachers' perceptions towards the implementation of group work in teaching English to Young Learners.

Theoretical Framework

Young Learners is five to twelve years old student who starts to learn about something (Cameron, 2001). Based on the above argument, it can be specified that Young Learners are the lower primary students who are in the first, second, and third grades.

Harmer (1998) defined group work as a cooperative activity that probably consists of five students for discussing the topic, practicing role-play and solving the problem. Group work is one of the teaching strategies that are commonly used by the teacher during the teaching-learning process. It involves students to interact with their peers or with their teachers. According to Frykedal & Chiriatic (2012), group work could teach students how to interact with others such as inquire, share ideas, clarify differences and construct new understandings. For young learners, it also creates their awareness with their social environment and helps them to be more confident to speak up and share the ideas in front of

people. Sugino (1994) in his study of the Japanese students recommended that it is clear that group work is one tool to facilitate their language use.

However, the implementation of group work in teaching English to young learners will be not worth or successful once the teachers themselves are not aware of teaching principles. Brown (2001) claimed there are five terms that teachers must consider in teaching English to young learners; intellectual development, attention span, sensory input, affective factor, and authentic or meaningful language.

Significance of the Study

The researcher hopes the result of the study is useful for the teachers in their teaching process in the future as the following; Teachers will improve their understanding of the teaching principles and using group work for teaching young learners, teachers will obtain more innovative activities in the class because they know group work theoretically and practically.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope and limitation of this research proposal are used to limit the discussion of the research proposal in order not to deviate from the purpose of the study. This study only focuses on the perceptions of teachers who are teaching English to young learners using group work. Whereas the limitation of this study is centered on young learners, they are students in the first grade to the third grade of elementary school. So, the result of this study is only for English teachers who teach elementary school, especially those who teach in first grade to the third grade.

Definition of Key Terms

In avoiding misconceptions and differences of perception, the researcher prepared the definition of the key term in this study:

1. Group Work is a cooperative activity that probably consists of three to five students for discussing the topic, practicing role-play and solving the problem (Harmer, 1998).

2. The word “young learner” can be defined as two years old to twelve years old children who start to learn about something (Cameron, 2001).
3. Teaching English to Young Learners can be defined as motivating, guiding, and facilitating elementary school students to learn, understand, comprehend English using some certain strategies or methods (Cameron, 2001; Nunan, 2011; Patel & Jain, 2008).