CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the writer presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, theoretical framework, significance of the study, limitation and scope of the study, definition of key terms, and organization of the proposal.

1.1 Background of the Study

Day by day, technology develops more and more. It affects many sectors including education. Teachers are not only the sources of getting knowledge but also useful information for students. Students can get information easily from various sources. They can watch television programs, access the Internet to access news, read some books, listen to podcasts, and many things. Students also can join online discussions with friends to gain knowledge. They can search any information they want to know by typing on search engines such as Google, Bing, Yahoo, and more, then the information appears. This high-technology era has changed the roles between teachers and students. Conventionally, students come to the classroom without knowing any new information. Teachers become the ones who explain all the information to students. However, teacher-centeredness cannot be applied in this era as knowledge and information has become easily accessible.

Tamah and Prijambodo's (2015) identified that teacher-centeredness has been replaced with student-centeredness approach. One reason to replace the

approach is teachers have realized that they are not the only sources to get information. The other reason is students may get bored if teachers explain the information that students already know. Therefore, most teachers nowadays try using the student-centered approach to teach students.

The student-centered approach becomes a pioneer in the development of learning approaches. In this approach, students' activities are important indicators in learning process and quality of learning product (Zohrabi, Torabi, & Baybourdiani, 2012).

In teaching and learning English, this approach links with flexible learning, experiential learning, and self-directed learning (Acat & Dönmez, 2009). Therefore, a student-centered classroom is a place where teachers consider the needs of students, as a group or individuals, and encourage them to take part in the learning process such as asking questions, answering questions, discussing the materials, and more. The teachers act as a facilitator rather than as an instructor. Students become active participants in the learning process whereas teachers help to guide students, manage their activities, and direct their learning.

There are several activities in the learning process that may bring many advantages in the learning process in English classes. In a student-centered class, students may work alone, in pairs, or in groups. For example, when students work alone, they can prepare ideas or make notes before class discussions, do the listening tasks, do short written assignments, or do grammar or vocabulary exercises. When teachers want to check the answers, students can work together in

pairs or groups to compare and discuss their answers. Students also can read and give comments to their friends's written work and suggest improvements. Students may work together in discussions or in role-plays, share ideas, opinions, and experiences. Students' group work activities may enhance students' cognitive development (Zohrabi, et al., 2012).

The theory of group work is based on the social constructivism which is stated by Vygotsky (1978). Vygotsky and Piaget believed that sociocultural environment affect students' cognitive development. Piaget believes that cognitive development is affected from the individual explorations about their environment to gain knowledge (Wibisono, 2019 referring to Johnson, 1991). However, Vygotsky's opinion about cognitive development is different from Johnson's. Vygotsky emphasizes on social factors which contributes to cognitive development. Vygotsky states that cognitive development is formed from social interactions. When children and their partners construct the knowledge, they are guided with zone of proximal development (ZPD). ZPD describes differences between (a) what learners can learn by themselves and (b) what learners can learn under guidance (Clapper, 2015 referring to Vygotsky, 1978). ZPD happens when learners interact in cooperation with others but lags behind internal developmental (Clapper, 2015). Vygotsky also states that the environment in which children grow up will influence how they think and what they think about. ZPD is related to cooperative learning because students learn what they can learn by the assistance of their friends and also with guidance from teachers.

According to Nagaraju (2013), group work brings some advantages to students such as when students are working together in English they talk more, share their ideas, learn from each other, feel more secure and less anxious, and use English in a meaningful way. Therefore, applying group work in the classroom help teachers increasing students' English proficiency.

Group work itself has a meaning of working together as a group or a team (Johnson, Smith, & Johnson, 1991). Group work is considered as a technique where students finish some assignments collaboratively (Brown 2001 as cited in Tamah 2017). Group work is also considered as the assignments given by teachers when the learners work in a small group (Tamah, 2017 refering to Nunan, 1999). Group work is also considered a classroom structure which excludes instructional materials (McDonough and Shaw 2003 in Tamah, 2017). From some definitions of group work that have been mentioned above, the writer conclude that group work is a group in a classroom where students work together with their friends to finish some assignments from teachers.

Despite many benefits obtained from group work, there are also disadvantages in applying group work. It needs a lot of time to do group work in the classroom (Alfares, 2017). Alfares (ibid.) identified that group work can waste time. In group work, each member of the group can ask any questions to their friends in their group. These question and answer activities may take a long time to do. Wang (2007) identified that students often use native language when they explain the task or the assignment to their group members who do not understand. Alfares (2017) identified that teachers have difficulties in scoring students when

using cooperative learning. The other disadvantages are the domination of one member of the group. If one member dominates the group, group performance reflects the groups' member level instead of the whole group together (Taqi & Al-Nouh, 2014 referring to Nihalini, 2010).

The problems will not happen if the group members activities apply cooperative learning components. Based on the theory of collaboration, collaboration is the same like the other skills which should be taught to students (Sparks, 2017). Here, teachers need to monitor their students in order to make the group work runs well. Tamah (2017) points out that teachers should become the facilitator when students do cooperative learning. When teachers become facilitators, they can encourage students to engage into deep discussion with their friend. For example, some of group members are silent when it comes to stating an opinion. At this time, teachers should involve themselves into students' group and encourage the silent students to say what is their opinion. When teachers do that, they help the group does the discussion smoothly. This can minimize the problems when doing cooperative learning.

Cooperative learning is an instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning (Johnson et al., 1991). In practice, students will get the same assignments and should finish them in their group. Each of the group members should share the ideas, information, and support each other. In cooperative learning, teachers have some roles in monitoring students. The roles are to specify the objective for the lesson, decide the group members, explain the task and goal, monitor and assist students' task (Johnson et

al., 1991). In teacher-centered learning students work individually. Students achieve the goals independently and they also realize that the achievement of their goals for learning is unrelated to what other students do (Johnson et al., 1991). They will only focus on their own success and do not want to bother with their group members' success. However, in cooperative learning, students work together to accomplish shared goals. When engaged in cooperative activities, individuals seek outcomes that are beneficial to themselves and to all other members of the group (Johnson et al., 1991). To achieve a good and effective cooperative learning teachers need to apply five components of cooperative learning. They are positive (1) interdependence, (2) face-to-face interaction, (3) individual accountability, (4) collaborative skills, and (5) group processing (Tamah, 2017 referring to Johnson et al., 1991).

Positive interdependence exists when students perceive that they are linked with other members of the group in a way that they cannot succeed unless the other members do (and vice versa) and/or that they must coordinate their efforts with the efforts of the others to complete a task (Johnson et al., 1991). Here students see that their effort will give benefits to the other group members. Every student should take responsibility to what they have learned, the information, the resources so that they can succeed in achieving their goals. This responsibility is related to individual accountability. In individual accountability, there is no free rider (the one who does not contribute anything to achieve the goal) (Tamah, 2017). 'Swim or sink together' is usually used as the term to describe this condition (Kagan & Kagan, 1994 as cited in Tamah, 2017). Face-to-face interaction can be defined as an interaction where

students encourage and facilitate each other in order to finish the assignments and achieve the groups' goal. The next is the ability to collaborate with the group members. This skill is needed among students because they work together with their friends and they have to collaborate well with the group members. The last is the reflection. Each group should reflect on what they have learned together with the other group members. The group will do the evaluation to their work and the result of it (Tamah, 2017). They can learn from their mistakes or from their good results.

The writer wants to analyze cooperative learning because the application of cooperative learning is not very structured in a school. This is based on the writer's experience in doing PLP 1 and PLP 2 at the school. At that time, teachers on that school applied cooperative learning. However, the implementation was not going well. Students talked to their group members about other topics which were not related to the materials. Some students did not want to state their opinions and they only wrote what their friends said. Also, some of them chose their closest friend to be their group members. For examples, high achieving students gathered with their smart friends whereas low achieveing students gathered with their low achiever friends. This situation made the group formation not equal. That is the reason why the writer wants to analyze more and evaluate the application of cooperative learning at St. Joseph Junior High School.

The writer is going to give questionnaires and do interviews to collect the research data. The interview is to deepen the data. This study can also be used as an evaluation for the application of cooperative learning which is not very structured in common classrooms. If the application of cooperative learning is not

very structured it can affect the learning process of the group work. The questionnaires used will be adapted from Tamah (2017). The writer chooses junior high students as the subjects of this study. This thesis attempts to investigate 8th graders' perception on cooperative learning.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the background of the study, the problem statements can be formulated:

1. What are students' perceptions on group naming when cooperative learning is implemented?
2. What are students' perceptions on modeling or simulation of group work when cooperative learning is implemented?
3. What are students' perceptions on the roles of group members when cooperative learning is implemented?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to investigate students perception about English learning using cooperative group work which includes group naming, modeling or simulation of group work, and the role of group members in cooperative group work.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

In this study, the writer uses some theories which adapted from Tamah (2017). They are social constructivism theory and cooperative learning. The

cooperative learning theory is based on social constructivism which is developed by Vygotsky (1978). Vygotsky states that the "human mind is constructed through a subject's interactions with the world and is an attribute of the relationship between subject and object," (Verenikina, 2010 referring to Vygotsky 1978). According to Vygotsky as cited in Turuk (2008), students are completely dependent on other people during the early stages as the sociocultural environment keeps on presenting them with a variety of tasks and demands, engaging the child in their world. Students will learn by interacting with other students. In real life, students need the role of teachers, parents, friends, and society in order to learn and get knowledge.

To apply the social constructivism in the education, teachers and school leaders need to shift and reshape their perspectives from the thought of "people who teach" to being "facilitators of learning" (Lynch, 2016). A good constructivist teacher is one who questions students' answers, without any regard to whether they are right or wrong. By this way, teachers attempt to investigate whether students have a good level of understanding of the concept being learned (Lynch, 2016). Additionally, instructors should have their students explain the answers they give and not allow students to use words or equations without explanations. They should also encourage students to reflect on their answers (Lynch, 2016)

The other theory used in this research is cooperative learning theory. This theory means that classroom uses small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning (Johnson et al., 1991). Cooperative learning strategies have demonstrated the ability to outperform the teacher-centered strategies in the classroom (Toumasis, 2004). Cooperative learning techniques in

the social studies classroom are not used as frequently as other disciplines use cooperative learning strategies (Yamarik, 2007). Cooperative learning is based on the premise that learning is best achieved interactively rather than through a one-way transmission process which has become the common practice of lock-step teachers (Tamah, 2011). The key in doing cooperative learning is students have to learn and teach one another among their group members (Tamah, 2011). According to Johnson (1991), there are five basics components of cooperative learning, they are face to face interaction, collaborative skills, group processing, individual accountability, and positive interdependence.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to investigate students' perception on Cooperative Learning. Students' perception could be used as an input to English teachers to improve their organizational skill when they want to use cooperative learning as their method in teaching. Also, the data of this study can be a guidance to conduct similar research for future study.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study will only be focusing on 8th graders' perceptions about cooperative group work in their English class. The questionnaires will be adapted from Tamah (2017). The questionnaires will cover three strategies out of the seven strategies mentioned in the book. They are group naming, modeling or simulation

of group work, and the role of group members. The subject of this study is the 8th graders in a private junior high school in Surabaya.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding and misperception, the writer defines the key terms related to the study:

1. **Cooperative group work**

   A very structured group work that enables students to work together optimally and help each other in their academic tasks (Tamah, 2017).

2. **The student's perception**

   Perception is sensory experience of the world around us and involves both recognizing environmental stimuli and actions in response to these stimuli (Cherry, 2019). In this research the writer will analyze the responses, the opinions of learning English using cooperative group work of the 8th graders.

3. **Modeling or simulation of group work**

   This technique is like a goldfish bowl. Students sit in two circles. There is an inner and an outer circle, where the outer circle of students sit around the inner circle of students. Students in the inner circle group do a discussion, while students in the outer circle group pay attention to what is being said and how it is being said (Tamah, 2017).

4. **Roles of group members**

   Following Tamah (2017), in this research the roles which are used include leader, time keeper, presenter, and secretary. The leader leads the discussion.

Time keeper reminds the group members about time allocation. The presenter presents the result of discussion. The secretary takes notes of what is important in the discussion.

5. **Group naming**

Group naming can be used to remind students to maintain the good characteristics in their society even though it is only a slight reminder (Tamah, 2017). The goal is not only to give the name for students' group but also as the example of the good life norm. For example, Caring, Responsible, Honest, Sincere, etc.

1.8 Organization of the Proposal

This proposal is divided into three chapters. The first chapter is introduction, covers background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, theoretical framework, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, definition of key terms and proposal organization. The second chapter consists of review of related literature. The research method is presented in Chapter 3.