CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

English has been known as an international language. The majority of the world's population speaks English as a second language, and the language is increasingly used in business, science, and diplomacy around the world. English is also often used for professional intercourse, such as the proceedings of meetings of health practitioners or educators from various countries (Larsen & Long, 1991). As an international language, English is learned and taught in many countries including Indonesia. English is taught in both formal education and non-formal education. As for formal education, English has been introduced to elementary school students or young learners.

Age is one of the important aspects of teaching English as a foreign language, the earlier the students start learning English, the easier they will master it. According to Anggaira (2015), it is widely assumed that children learn languages faster than adults. In addition to the student's age, the method of teaching is also influenced by age. Children prefer to study a language in a more relaxed and play-like atmosphere. The methods that encourage them to play and move around are highly motivating to them as stated by the same article. Thus, teaching young learners is certainly not an easy thing to do. Learners around that age tend to be playful, active, and get bored easily. These particular characteristics of young learners urge English teachers to be creative by designing a fun and engaging learning environment so the students can learn effectively in class. However, there are still many teachers who find it difficult to create such environment that can encourage students to learn English and make them participate actively in class activities.

One of the strategies that teachers can use to make a fun, engaging, and lively learning environment where students can actively participate is to use games in the classroom. This idea is supported by Jan et al. (2015) who states that the use of games in the classroom can help increase students' participation and foster their learning.

Nowadays, games are mostly used by teachers especially those who teach young learners as the use of games in the classroom is known to be able to stimulate students' interest thus making the teaching and learning process become effective. In accordance with this idea, Ersoz (2000) states that games are extremely motivating because they are entertaining and engaging. They can also be used to practice a wide range of communication skills, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

Based on the researcher's observation, young learners tend to have problem in learning English as they lack motivation and their learning environment is not equipped with interactive as well as engaging activities that can help stimulate their interest and motivation to learn English. They will not learn well if they find the class boring, therefore the teachers need to think of a method to teach English to young learners in a fun way. One of the best and well-known method to resolve this problem is to use games. The researcher is interested in conducting this research to know the use of games to teach young learners from the perspective of English teachers.

1.2 Research Questions

- How is the process of teaching English to young learners by using games?
- How to select the suitable games to teach English to young learners?
- What are the challenges in using games to teach English to young learners?
- How do teachers perceive the use of games to teach English to young learners?

1.3 Research Objectives

- To find out the process of implementing games in teaching English to young learners
- To know the process of selecting games that teachers use in teaching English to young learners
- To discover the challenges faced by the teachers in using games to teach English to young learners
- To know teachers' perspective towards the use of games as a teaching strategy to teach English young learners

1.4 Theoretical Framework

According to Hadfield (1999), games are classified into two categories: linguistic and communicative. Linguistic games emphasized correct language usage while communicative games emphasized the successful exchange of information and ideas. Although still important, correct language usage is secondary to achieving the communication objective. Games allow students to communicate with one another in a more authentic way, which helps to bridge the gap between the classroom and the outside world.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to provide an in-depth look at how games can be used in the classroom and how teachers perceive the use of games to teach English, thus helping teachers to develop a more suitable approach in teaching English to young learners. This research will focus on the kind of games that are conducted in the classroom which can also help engaging the students and the teachers in a real-time interaction. It is also hoped that this research can serve as a starting point for the development of future research.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study focuses on finding out teacher's perspective in using games to teach young learners. The subjects of this study are three English teachers from three different elementary schools who are entrusted to teach young learners, in this case, elementary students. They will be asked questions about their experience in using games to teach English.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

(1) **Young Learners**

In most nations, young learners refer to students in their first few years of formal education, also known as primary or elementary school. In this study, young learners' range in age from roughly five to twelve years old (McKay, 2006).

(2) **Games**

Game is any fun activity which gives young learners the opportunity to practice the foreign language in a relaxed and enjoyable way (Martin, 1995, as cited in Ellis et al., 2002).

(3) **Descriptive Qualitative Study**

Descriptive qualitative research is a research method that focuses on understanding a phenomenon through the examination of its characteristics and traits (Regoniel, 2023).

1.8 Organization of the Study

This study consists of the following three chapters. The first chapter is introduction of the study. It contains the background of the study, problem statements, theoretical framework, the study's scope and limitations, the study's objectives, the significance of the study, definitions of key terms, and the organization of the study.

The second chapter is the review of related literature. It includes related and relevant theories that support the study and previous studies of similar or related research.

The third chapter is the research methodology. It explains the research design, participants, instruments, data sources, data collection procedure, and data analysis technique.

The fourth chapter consists of the data analysis, findings and discussion.

The fifth chapter consists of the conclusion and suggestions.