

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION OF THE RESEARCH

This chapter presents the introduction of this study. The discussion includes background underlying this study, research questions, aims of the study, the scope and significance of the study, research methods, research procedure, data analysis, clarification of terms, and the paper organization.

1.1 Background

In teaching a foreign language, teachers need the ability to design appropriate classroom activities. A unified set of activities is a bridge to transfer the knowledge of the teacher to the students. It is important for the teachers to design activities that give their students something to do as the learning process. Since a foreign language, like English, is something new and may be need extra efforts to learn, teachers have to design the classroom activities that generate enthusiasm and create desired environments (Ambard, 2004). However, Harmer (2007) argues that the teachers need to try to match the activities they take into lessons with the students they are teaching. They need different treatments in teaching English as a Foreign Language to students with different characteristics. A major factor in teacher decisions in designing classroom activities is the age of the students (Harmer, 2007). Different ages have different needs, competencies, and learning styles. The teachers should be aware of this factor because the

activities they create in the classroom will lead to the success or failure of learning process. Teachers who teach young learners have to be more creative in creating the activities than other teachers who teach adolescent or adult learners. Cameron (2005: 1) attempts that young children are often more enthusiastic and lively as learners but they lose interest more quickly and are less able to keep themselves motivated on tasks they find difficult. It is the task of the teachers to keep their students enthusiastic to the lesson through various activities. The task of the teachers, as stated by Harmer (2007: 83) is to plan a range of activities for given time period, and be flexible enough to move on to the next exercise when they see their students getting bored.

However, some young learners might have visual impairments that can be caused by disease, trauma, or an inborn or degenerative condition that cannot be corrected by conventional way, including refractive correction, medication or surgery. They have a significant limitation of visual capability, so education can be a difficult process for them (Joy, 2010). The teachers have to make the education easier than the students thought even though they obviously faces a limitation of visual equipments such as textbooks, class outlines, class schedules, chalkboards writing, etc.

Because of their limitation in visual activities, visually impaired students are only able to do audio activities in the classroom. Therefore, children with visual impairments have a good sense in hearing than others. King (n.d.) argues that listening is not a skill that is automatically developed so you must teach children how to listen with appropriate and engaging activities. On the other hand,

there will be lack of physical activities. This brings some problems to the teachers, both visually impaired teachers and sighted teachers, in designing various activities.

In regard to classroom, Halliwell writes (cited from Harmer, 2007: 83) that teachers are obviously not talking about classrooms where children spend all their time sitting still in rows or talking to the teacher. It is in line with Harmer (2007) that one of children characteristics is that they love discovering things and they may well be involved in games or physical movements. The activities which involved students in physical movements bring the learning experience to the students. It is very important because children learn foreign language depends on what they experience (Cameron, 2005).

It is teacher's task to design activities which will bring learning experience to the children. According to Kashdan (2009), the teacher has to design activities in which the students can learn when a new language and a physical activity are combined in a comprehensible and enjoyable way. Classroom activities are designed based on language focus in the syllabus or textbook (Moon, 2005). Since visually impaired students have visual limitation, curriculum for visually impaired students is different from the curriculum for sighted students. Therefore, the syllabus is also different. The teachers have to modify the class activities. There is no doubt that having a visually impaired child in your classroom might initially cause you some extra work (Meeker, 2010). Some adaptations to the learning materials and the teaching approaches have to be made so that the learning needs of visually impaired children can be met. The curriculum should be balanced with

due consideration given to the children's intellectual, personal, emotional and social developments. In learning English, two of those adaptations can be done; adaptation to textbooks (e.g. using written descriptions instead of picture cues) and learning English Braille that represents the letters of the alphabet, part of the word signs, contractions, short-form words and whole words.

Some researches have found that one of the effective techniques in teaching visually impaired students is using Dictogloss technique. In dictogloss, learners work in cooperative groups to recreate a text that has either been read aloud to the class by the teacher or presented as an audio recording (Miguel, 2008). So, the students should be divided into small groups of three or four to reconstruct the text given. The students are asked to write down the keywords and lexical items that they hear as the text is read aloud. The activity goes 'deep' into students' listening comprehension, evaluating how well students understand, sort and can re-access the content and details of something they heard read aloud. It then establishes valuable links with other language skills, including the students' ability to accurately reproduce what they heard in terms that apply to their own understanding and language skills.

Kowal and Swain (1997) explored the effectiveness of using Dictogloss technique in teaching English to the blind students with the 8th grade France students as the sample (Tedick, 2001). It showed that students often focused not only on the grammatical aspect being emphasized and the pair work but also whole class discussion afterwards about the links between meaning and form in relation to the composing process.

This study will try to elaborate how teachers, who teach English as a Foreign Language to visually impaired children, design various activities to be applied in the teaching-learning process. The technique in which the teachers adapt to develop class activities, the problems they faced, and how they deal with the problems will be figured out. Hopefully, this study will help the teachers, particularly who teach in a school for special students such as for visually impaired students, to improve their teaching skills and the result of the study will be useful for educational field.

1.2 Statements of the Problem

This study is conducted to investigate:

1. What class activities do the teachers develop for young learners with visual impairments?
2. What are the problems faced by the teachers in developing class activities for young learners with visual impairments?

1.3 Aims of the Study

The study is conducted to gain information related to the research questions.

The aims of this study are:

1. To gain the information about the class activities for visually impaired children that the teachers develop based on language focus mentioned in the syllabus or textbook.

2. To know the problems faced by the teachers in developing class activities for visually impaired children based on focus mentioned in the syllabus or textbook.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study will be focused on the activities developed by the teachers in the classroom based on syllabus or textbook. There are two cases to be investigated in order to make the study more specific, those are:

1. The information about the class activities for visually impaired children that the teachers develop based on language focus that mentioned in syllabus or textbook.
2. The problems faced by the teachers in developing class activities for visually impaired children that the teachers develop based on language focus that mentioned in syllabus or textbook.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study contributes in improving teaching skills of teachers, particularly who teach young learners with visual impairments. This study is important to gain the information about the appropriate activities in teaching English for young learners with visual impairments. This study elaborates some problems faced by the teachers in teaching young learners with visual impairments and how to solve those problems. Hopefully, the result of this study will contribute in improving teaching-learning process in the class specifically for visually impaired students.

In addition, this study will be beneficial for others who will do the study in the same field.

1.6 Research Methods

1.6.1 Research Design

This study uses descriptive-qualitative method. Descriptive study allows the writer to describe, analyze, classify and interpret data. This study does not involve statistical analysis. According to Alwasilah (2008), the researchers on qualitative studies focus on a phenomena with internal validity and contextual understanding.

1.6.2 Subject

This study involves two English teachers who teach visually impaired students in an elementary school for special children in Bandung to elicit information about the class activities they develop and also about the problems they faced in developing the activities. Alwasilah (2008) argue that in doing a research, we are not only selecting human as the sample but also we have to involve settings, events, and processes. So, the classroom activities in fourth and fifth grade will be observed.

1.6.3 Data Collection

1. Classroom observation

Two classes purposively in an elementary school for special children in Bandung will be observed. Observation allows the researchers to build their own understanding about theory-in-use and even the

participants point of view that do not give by the teachers when doing the interview or answering the questionnaire (Alwasilah, 2008: 155). This observation was conducted through field notes. The fourth and fifth grade will be the sample of the observation. The videotaping and observation sheet will be needed in this instrument.

2. Interview

Some questions will be asked to the teachers in an Elementary School for special children in Bandung. The purpose is to gain the factual information about the steps in developing activities in the classroom and teachers' opinion about the problems they faced in developing those activities.

3. Documents Analysis

The teachers are asked to collect a syllabus or the materials from textbook they used. As stated by Moon (2005), activities in the classroom are arranged by teachers based on language focus mentioned in the syllabus or textbook.

1.6.4 Research Procedures

In conducting the study, there were several steps:

1. Conducting classroom observation.
2. Videotaping and note taking of teaching-learning process.
3. Interviewing the subjects.
4. Analyzing the video and the observation sheet to look activities that the teachers develop in the classroom.

5. Transcribing the recording interview.
6. Analyzing the interview transcripts to find how the teachers develop class activities for visually impaired children and the problems faced by the teachers in developing those activities.
7. Studying the documents: syllabus or the materials from textbook.
8. Presenting the result of the study.

1.6.5 Data Analysis

The data collected is analyzed in some ways. The procedures in analyzing the data are in follows:

1. The observation sheets and video are analyzed.
2. Categorizing the result of classroom observation.
3. Make the transcript of the interview and analyze the transcript by referring it to the research questions.
4. The documents collected such as textbooks or syllabus will be analyzed related to the activities that the teachers develop and to the relevant theory.
5. The last step is describing the result into descriptive case study.

1.7 Clarification of Terms

1. Classroom activities are a unified set of action or something to do in the classroom as the learning process of students provide by the teacher (Cameron, 2001). Classroom activities may be based on the language focus in the syllabus or materials in the textbook (Moon, 2005).

2. Young learners can be used to describe pre-school learners, primary school learners, and secondary school or teenage learners (Pinter, 2006).
3. Visual impairments is vision loss (of a person) having reduced vision as to constitute a handicap that to constitutes a significant limitation of visual capability resulting from disease, trauma, or a congenital or degenerative condition that cannot be corrected by conventional means, including refractive correction or surgery (see appendix C, p.1).
4. Visually impaired students are students with visual disability or having visual impairments that might be improved by medical intervention and not by spectacles or contact lenses (see appendix C, p.3).
5. Language focus refers to the main focus of competences in learning a language.
6. Syllabus is a detailed and operational statement of teaching and learning elements which translates the philosophy of the curriculum into a series of planned steps leading towards more narrowly defined objectives at each level (Kashdan, 2009).
7. Textbook refers to a book that used as a source of the materials in teaching-learning process.

1.8 Paper Organization

The paper is organized in order to make the paper arranged systematically.

This paper organization is:

1.8.1 Background

In this part, the writer explains the reason of choosing the topic of the study and reviews the theories that related to the topic.

1.8.2 Statements of the Problem

In this part, the writer states the problem in three questions that will be needed to do the study.

1.8.3 Aims of the Study

In this part, the writer gives the purpose of the study related to the research questions.

1.8.4 Scope of the Study

In this part, the writer gives the limitation of the problem which will be discussed.

1.8.5 Significance of the Study

In this part, the writer formulates the study and elaborates the relation of the study with the education field.

1.8.6 Research Methodology

In this part, the writer explains the method that will be used in conducting the study.

1.8.7 Clarification of Terms

In this part, the writer explains some terms related to the study in order to avoid misunderstanding.

1.8.8 Paper Organization

In this part, the writer writes paper organization as the illustration of the study.