

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This research is a qualitative study of students' engagement in English learning at one of junior high schools in Bandung. First chapter provides background of the research, research questions, aim of the research, scope of the research, significance of the research, brief description of research methods, and clarification of terms. The chapter is closed by presenting the organization of the paper.

1.1 Background

English has an important role in the development of Indonesia because it takes part as international language (Nurkamto, 2001) and half of the world's scientific literature is written in English (Broughton, 2003). The importance of English leads into recommendation of Indonesian government on making English as compulsory subject in secondary schools (Nurkamto, 2001). Nowadays students are expected to learn English since primary level for English has been introduced in elementary schools and it has been part of national final examination in junior high schools.

Learning is an active process (Pinter, 2006) and so is English learning. It can be done if students decide to take part in the activity, as Barkley (2010) cited Angelo and Cross's (1993) statement that learning can happen without teaching but teaching cannot occur without learning; without learning, teaching is just

talking. Most students will not do their best when they think teacher does not care and is not interested in them (Jones, 2008), and they also will not give their best when they do not enjoy and value what they do (Barkley, 2010). In other hand, they need to be motivated.

Students who believe that achieving, working hard, and doing task as the way to enhance their lives are more likely to be engaged in the classroom (Sullo, 2009). Shulman (2002) says that students' engagement is the beginning of learning (Barkley, 2010).

Students' engagement occurs when students are motivated and actively learning. Students will not willingly put effort in task that are meaningless and not enjoyable for them even if they could perform the tasks well, nor they willingly put effort in meaningful tasks they believe they cannot do the tasks well no matter how hard they try (Barkley, 2010). In other words, students' motivations are influenced by what they think is important and what they believe they can accomplish (Ibid). Students who actively learn relate their learning to their past experiences and knowledge making it a meaningful learning (Brown, 2001; Barkley, 2010).

Students' engagement has been believed as an essential factor in learning. It has been suggested that students' engagement can be used as an indicator of institutional teaching quality (Kuh, 2001) in Beer et al. (2010). High motivation and engagement in learning have consistently been related to dropout rates and increased levels of student success (Blank, 1997; Dev, 1997; Kushman, 2000; Woods, 1995) as stated by Brewster and Fager (2000). It has been found that

student engagement is linked positively to desirable learning outcomes such as critical thinking and grades (Carini, 2004).

This research of student engagement entitled “*Students’ Engagement in English Learning*” is conducted in order to give description on students’ engagement in English class and students’ self-evaluation on their engagement. The research focuses on students’ engagement of eight graders in English class.

1.2 Research Questions

There are two research questions addressed in this research:

1. How do students engage in English class?
2. How do students evaluate their own learning engagement in English class?

1.3 Aim of the Research

The aim of the research is to get description of:

1. students’ engagement in English class,
2. students’ self evaluation of their learning engagement in English class.

1.4 Scope of the Research

The research focuses on students’ engagement that can be seen through students’ interaction with the teacher and peers, and through their attitude towards tasks given in English classroom. Moreover, students’ mental engagement that

can be seen from students' answer for self-checklist questionnaires and interviews is also included in this research.

1.5 Significance of the Research

The results of this research are expected to provide teachers with the description on students' engagement in English learning. Hopefully the result can help teachers to enhance their teaching skill and motivate their students well.

1.6 Research Method

This part presents research methodology used in this paper.

1.6.1 Research Design

Qualitative approach is used in this research because there is a problem or issue which needs to be explored, it is conducted for a need to study a group or population (Creswell, 2007). The issue to be explored in this research is students' engagement in English learning.

1.6.2 Research Participants

The participant of this research is a group of second graders from the same class of junior high school in Bandung, West Java.

1.6.3 Data Collection Method

In collecting data, questionnaires were distributed to the students in order to get students' self-evaluation on their engagement in English learning. The questionnaire is adaptation of Jones's (2009) framework. Then observation was taken place to see how the students behaviorally engaged during the class, this way human behaviors within the contexts of their natural occurrence was able to be explored (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Erickson, 1986; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Jacob, 1988; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) as stated by Hatch (2002). The next step was interviewing the teacher and 13 students to investigate their inner thought regarding this issue.

1.6.4 Data Analysis

The data from the questionnaires and interview are analyzed according to related literature to get the description of students' self-evaluation on their engagements in English learning.

The observation is used to make a description of students' behavioral engagement based on what researcher saw, the purpose is to explore significant features of the issue and later interpreted what is observed (Bassegy, 1999).

In this research, the data are analyzed using related theories to get some findings which derived to the final conclusion of the study.

1.7 Clarification of Terms

1. Students' engagement: In this research, students' engagement refers to combination of students' time on task and their willingness to participate in activities as Beer et al. (2010) cited Stovall (2003).
2. English learning: the process of getting new knowledge (of English) by studying it at school.
3. Students: the second graders of one junior high school in Bandung who belong to same class.
4. Self-evaluation: students fill out the questionnaire regarding their feelings on English learning.

1.8 Organization of Paper

The paper will be presented into five chapters:

Chapter I

The first chapter is the introduction. It consists of background of the research, research questions, aim of the research, scope of the research, significance of the research, research method, clarification of terms, and organization of the paper.

Chapter II

The second chapter talks about the framework of the study and the basis theory for the research.

Chapter III

The third chapter is about the research method of the study, data collection, and the data presentation.

Chapter IV

The fourth chapter is the chapter of findings and discussions. The chapter contains the analysis of data according to related theory.

Chapter V

This fifth chapter is the conclusion of the research and suggestion for further research.

