

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the introductory explanation that serves to give outline of the research in this study. It covers the background of this research that indicates the importance of having creativity in designing theme-based lesson plan for teaching English to young learners. Moreover, it also covers the research questions, the aims of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, clarification of key terms, organization of paper, and concluding remark.

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

The main principle of teaching foreign language to young learners is to provide teaching and learning activities that is meaningful in contexts and can achieve the learning objectives effectively in the same time (Cameron, 2001). One of the ways to reach this is by using theme-based instruction. Karli (2009; p.71-73) showed in her study that the implementation of theme-based instruction in education in Indonesia is not going well yet. The Ministry of Education gave many easiness and facilities regarding the implementation of theme-based teaching for primary schools in accordance to current curriculums, Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP) 2006, such as the availability of theme-based textbooks, and syllabuses. She claimed that the teachers in fact did not fully understand the whole idea of ‘theme-based teaching’, how to implement it, and how to adjust and insert many creative ideas into creative activities in the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

Theme-based teaching or theme-based instruction is an approach in which children, the students, have the opportunity to acquire English as a second language through

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the integration of four skills around a theme which suits the way they naturally learn (Cameron, 2001; p. 181). Children will comprehend and recall the new vocabulary items easily; create experiences in the learning activities which are meaningful in content, try out the new phrases or sentences in the foreign language, and be motivated because the theme is in accordance to their interest; learn to use the foreign language naturally in both spoken and written in line with the theme around classroom activities; and be encouraged to use the foreign language precisely and accurately in order to express their ideas correctly (Cameron, 2001; p. 191-194).

By focusing on the themes which are based on students' interest, the teaching and learning activities will be appealing and engaging for the students (Johannessen, 2000; p. 8). Thus, English teachers have to be aware in designing theme-based lesson plan. They need not only to comprehend the steps in planning theme-based lesson plan, but also to create a creative theme-based lesson plan, as Karli (2009; p.72) stated that one of the main problems of primary English teachers is to design creative activities in the classroom.

In accordance of Karli (2009; p.72) to what Seltzer and Bentley (1999; p. 9-10, cited in Craft and Jeffrey, 2001; p.3) stated, the vital challenge of educational system is to figure out the teaching and learning process that contains meaningful contexts in which subconsciously cause the students to use their knowledge and skills creatively to solve problems in the real life situations. Thus, it is important for the teacher to create a creative teaching and learning environment for the children in order to further give an impact on the students' creative development.

Teachers play a significant role in the success of teaching English to young learners (Pinter, 2006). A study held by Hemaloshinee Vasudevan (2013) suggested that the teacher's creativity, attitude, and commitment have a strong impact for students' proficiency in English subject. There are some significances in creating a creative English teaching in primary schools as suggested by Cremin (2009; p. 1-2) such as

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(1) the learners will be getting involved in the teaching and learning process imaginatively and broaden their reproductive and evaluative abilities; (2) the learners will be helped in developing the four skills of English righteously; (3) the learners have the chances to express themselves freely in creative movements and meaningful contexts, explore ideas, commence their own ways of learning, and evaluate themselves by using various media and language modes.

There is a study conducted by Wiesen (2000, 2001, cited in Yang, 2009; p. 162) who proposed that the successful language learning depends on students' motivation. The type of motivation that is strongly encourage children to learn is intrinsic motivation in which they do the learning process for the sake of their needs, interest, curiosity, and pleasure (Dörnyei, 1998 and Uno, 2008). Therefore, in order to get the children be intrinsically motivated in the learning process, the teacher needs to create learning activities which suit children's interest in meaningful ways that is best performed by theme-based instruction (Mumford, 2000). However, it is further than only creating a piece of theme-based lesson plan, but the creative one. The creative theme-based instruction helps children experiences various exposures and experiences around one theme in interesting, fun, and effective ways (NACCCE, 1999, cited in Jeffrey and Craft, 2004 and Pappas, Kiefer, and Levstik (2006; p. 52).

Cremin (2009; p. 1) proposed that at its richest, teaching and learning English is an activity that is enjoyable, purposeful, and imaginative experience in order to improve students' competence, confidence, and creativity. While, at its poorest, it can be a boring, didactic activities which focus more on tasks of measurable skills and less concern about students' affective and creative development (Cremin, 2009; p.1). Thus, it is important to create teaching and learning environment to the fullest which essentially involves the creativity of the teacher.

There were some studies regarding teacher's creativity and theme-based instruction to teaching English to young learners. Although there was surprisingly no exact study

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that examines the teacher's creativity in designing lesson plan in implementing theme-based instruction for teaching English to young learners, there were some studies that examined these variables separately. A study employed by Yang (2009; p. 161-176) investigated the ESL students' perceptions and the impact of a theme-based teaching in an English primary course for ESL students in a non-school setting in Hong Kong. There was also a study by Graham (2002, cited in Safford and Barrs, 2005; p.17) which proposed that the creative and imaginative classroom activities can affect significantly on literacy development of children.

Therefore, this study attempts to fill the gap in which there is no exact study on the relationship between teacher's creativity and planning theme-based instruction for teaching English to young learners. Thus, this study focuses on the analysis of teacher's creativity in designing theme-based lesson plan in teaching English to young learners.

## **1.2. Research Questions**

This study will be conducted to answer the problems that are formulated in the following questions:

1. What aspects of creativity features in teaching English to young learners are included in teachers' theme-based lesson plans?
2. What were considerations taken by the teachers in designing creative theme-based lesson plans in teaching English to young learners?

## **1.3. Aims of the Study**

In accordance with the research questions, this study is aimed to meet the following purposes:

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1. To identify the creativity features in teaching English to young learners that the teachers employed in designing theme-based lesson plans.
2. To reveal the considerations taken by the teachers in designing creative theme-based lesson plans in teaching English to young learners.

#### **1.4. Scope of the Study**

This study and the analysis focus on analyzing three primary English teachers in terms of their creativity in designing theme-based lesson plans in teaching English to young learners. The three teachers come from different primary schools. Every teacher contributes four lesson plans from one class.

#### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

This study will give theoretical and practical benefits. In terms of theory, this study can contribute to the enrichment of creativity literature in education, especially teacher's creativity and creative teaching. In terms of practice, the result of this study will be useful for teachers to discover their creative abilities in designing theme-based lesson plan and develop their creativity as well. Moreover, it is expected to give information to the teachers on how to create a creative theme-based lesson plan and how to improve the teaching and learning activities into the creative ones.

#### **1.6. Clarification of Key Terms**

To avoid misinterpretations, misjudgments, and misunderstanding toward some concepts presented in this study, this section will clarify some terms, which are:

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1. Creativity features: aspects of creativity that a primary English teacher has in conducting teaching and learning activities in the classroom which includes profiling meaning and purpose; foregrounding potent affectively engaging texts and media; fostering play; promoting curiosity and questioning stance; encouraging collaboration and making connection; autonomy; and fostering originality (Cremin, 2009; Grainger, *et al.*, 2006, cited in Craft, 2009; Horner and Ryf, 2007; and Jones and Wyse, 2004).
2. Teacher's creativity: the ability of teacher to take the power in the classroom and transform it into interesting, fun, and suitable activities that fit to students' interest, characteristics, and the need of educational goals (NACCCE, 1999, cited in Jeffrey and Craft, 2004; Jeffrey and Woods, 2003; Woods and Jeffrey, 1996; cited in Craft, 2009).
3. Theme-based instruction: one of teaching models in integrated-skills approaches that organizes a lesson around a theme or topic which is not only providing students with various interests on themes and its content, but also help the students to achieve institutional needs to improve their language skills in meaningful ways (Harmer, 2007; Brown, 2000; and Mumford, 2000).
4. Theme-based lesson plan: set of steps of classroom activities in which a teacher designed as guidance to teach one particular subject over a period of particular time which is organized around a theme or topic and integrated skills approach (Harmer, 2007; Hinkel, 2006; and Brown, 2000).

## **1.7. Organization of Paper**

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The paper of study is organized into five chapters. Each section is provided by subsections to give an insight to the topic under investigation. The first chapter is introduction. This chapter provides background of study, statements of problem, purpose of study, scope of study, significance of study, clarification of key terms, and organization of paper in order to give an overview to the readers.

The second chapter is theoretical foundation. This chapter covers some relevant theories as the foundation of the research. It covers the theories of lesson planning, teacher's creativity, theme-based instruction, and young learners. In addition, the related studies and concluding remarks are also included in this chapter. The purpose of the theories is to give a clear direction of how this research should be conducted.

The third chapter is research methodology. This chapter focuses on the methodology employed in conducting the study. It covers research design, participant and site of the study, data collection, and data analysis.

The fourth chapter is findings and discussions. This chapter presents the findings of the data analysis. Those findings will be discussed and interpreted in this chapter.

The last chapter is conclusions and suggestions. This chapter presents the conclusion and some suggestions to other researchers who intend to develop the research.

### **1.8. Concluding Remark**

This chapter has presented some aspects underlying the study including background of the study, statement of problems, purposes of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, clarification of key terms, and organization of the paper. The next section will present some theories relevant to the study.