

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the general issues related to the study. It covers the background of the study, statement of the problem, aims of the study, hypothesis, significance of the study, clarification of terms and organization of the paper.

1.1. Background of the Study

Language is a tool that has a primary function to communicate information. As a global language, English is believed as one of the important language to be learned in many countries (David, 2003). As in Indonesia, English has been taught since the elementary to the senior stage in order to help the students gaining the communicative skills. In order to gain the communicative skill, there are four domains of skill that should be mastered by the students, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. In learning those four domains, the learners need to know the rules so that they can use the language properly.

In learning English, the rules are called grammar. It is stated that grammar is the rules on how making a word or a sentence to be meaningful. As stated by Brown (2000), grammar is the system of rules governing the conventional arrangement and relationship of words in a sentence. It is believed that if someone knows a language, it means he has acquired the ability to produce sentences which is grammatically correct (adapted from Surovee 2014, as cited in Dickins and Woods 1988). Therefore, in order to help the students learning English, they need to know the grammar itself so that the learners can produce texts which are grammatically correct.

In teaching English, there are several methods used in the classroom for example scientific approach, project-based approach, discovery learning, task-based

approach and theme-based teaching. In this research, theme-based teaching is applied in teaching grammar and to investigate whether the method helps the learner improving their grammar skill or not.

It is stated that theme-based teaching is a tool for teaching a set of skill and content by integrating the material around a topic (Institute, 2016). In other words by using this method, the learner will learn the material around one topic for several meetings. Cameron (2001) proposed that theme-based teaching will provide realistic and motivating uses of the language which has a clear meaning for the children (Cameron, 2001). Moreover, it is stated that theme-based teaching is an excellent strategy to make the transition from teacher directed to more student directed learning. (Institute, 2016). Therefore, it can be seen that the main point on using this approach is a theme.

As the core of this method, the theme will cover the material which is chosen based on the learners' need and interest, the institution's expectation and also the program resources; the teacher abilities and interest (adapted from Pusparini 2013, as cited in Stoller & Grabe, 1977). Looking at those factors, the theme should be chosen wisely. Therefore, the teacher needs to do some researches on how the theme will relate with their daily life in choosing the theme,

Conferring the explanation above, theme-based teaching will perfectly relate in teaching young learners. Young learners, as stated by Pinter, are the children from five to fourteen years old (Pinter, 2006). Therefore, a junior high school student on grade seven is still considered as a young learner. It is said that young learners are wonderful in absorbing new language (Povakalova, 2012). The first stage of absorbing a new language for young learners is called noticing (Scrivener, 2003). Therefore, the learners will easily notice a new language since the theme chosen will be related with their need and interest.

There are many researches that have been conducted related to the use of theme-based in the classroom. However, there are only few researches related to the

theme-based teaching that associate with the improvement of student's grammar skill. Moreover, the related studies conducted mostly in the primary school. Therefore, by conducting this research in the Junior High School, it is expected that the students will find English learning process meaningful that will lead to their grammar skill improvement.

1.2. Research Questions

Based on the background of this research, the purpose of the study is intended to answer these two questions:

- 1 How effective is the theme-based teaching in improving student's grammar skill?
- 2 What is the student's response towards the theme-based teaching that is implemented to improve their grammar skill?

1.3. Aims of Study

As the research questions stated, this research is aimed to reach two purposes. First is to find out the effectiveness of the implementation of the approach to student's grammar skill. Second, to find out the students' responses towards the theme-based teaching that is implemented to improve their grammar skill.

1.4. Hypotheses

It is stated that a hypothesis is a prediction, an explanation of the research outcome. Moreover, in order to test the research hypothesis or the alternative hypothesis (H_a), the researcher must formulate the null hypothesis (H_0) (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). The hypothesis of this research is stated below:

H_0 : the implementation of theme-based teaching does not give significant difference in learning grammar.

H_1 : the implementation of theme-based teaching gives significant difference in learning grammar.

1.5. Significance of the Study

It is expected that the findings of this study will be beneficial theoretically and practically for the teacher and for the institution concerned with teaching English as in the following ways:

- Theoretically, this study aims to enrich the literature related to the implementation of theme-based teaching in improving students' grammar skill.
- Practically, this study can provide information and suggestion for the teacher in implementing theme-based teaching in improving students' grammar skill in the learning process.

1.6. Research Methodology

In order to find out the answer for the first research question, the effectiveness of theme-based teaching in improving students' grammar skill, this research employed quantitative approach with quasi-experimental method. Moreover, in this research, the researcher used the experimental design which compares two treatments in two groups in order to studying the effects. Those groups were namely experimental group and control group.

The experimental group received the treatment which is theme-based teaching, while the control group received the not theme-based teaching. The treatment is implemented to find out the difference of both treatments in improving students' grammar skill. Thus, pre-test and posttest is applied. Pre-test and posttest is applied to analyze the grammar skill improvements. Moreover, in order to answer the second research question, the questionnaires were distributed.

The population of this research was seventh grade of Junior High School in Lembang. The samples of this research are two classes of seventh grade students, VII-I and VII-J. VII-I is the control group while the VII-J is the experimental group. Furthermore, the data gained from both classes during the research is analyzed using SPSS 16.00 for windows.

1.7. Clarification of Terms

In this research there are several terms used. In order to avoid misunderstanding and the misconception of the reader(s), the terms that are used in this study are clarified below.

1) Theme-based teaching

Theme-based teaching in this study refers to the approach that is used to teach English in order to improve the students' grammar skill. It is an approach in which the whole course structure around particular theme (Brinton, 2001). In applying this approach, theme is the main point. In this study, the theme used by the researcher is "*Family*".

2) Grammar

Grammar is believed as the "art of letter" (Kruzicova, 2015). In this study, grammar refers to the system of rules that control the conventional organization and relationship of words in a sentence (Brown, 2000). It is a rule on how making a word or a sentence to be meaningful.

3) Young Learners

In this study refers to the children who are on the early stage of the Junior High School which is the 7th grade students.

1.8. Organization of the Paper

This paper is organized into five chapters as follows:

Chapter I Introduction

This chapter focuses on the introduction of the research which consists of background of the study, the statement of the problem, the aims of the study, the significance of the study, clarification of terms and organization of the paper.

Chapter II Theoretical Framework

This chapter focuses on the theories and literature related to the topic of the study. It presents the

Chapter III Research Method

This chapter discusses the methodology that is used in this study. It consists of research design, research site and participant, data collection and data analysis.

Chapter IV Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents the results of the study and discusses the findings of the study. It consists of the analysis of the pilot test, pre and posttest and questionnaire.

Chapter V Conclusions and Suggestions

This chapter presents the entire conclusion of the study and provides suggestions as contributions for further learning and research.

