

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a general description of the paper. It consists of the background of the study, research questions, aims of the study, the scope of the study and the significance of the study. The clarification of main terms and the organization of the paper are also included in this chapter.

1.1 Background of the Study

Teaching foreign language to young learners (children between five and twelve years old) has happened for a long time. Children may learn a foreign or second language better than the adult, according to The Critical Period Hypothesis, young children can learn a second language particularly effectively before puberty because their brains are still able to use the mechanisms that assist first language acquisition (Cameron, 2001).

Children's process in acquiring the first language requires meaningful interaction in natural communication--in which they are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding (Krashen, 1981). Meanwhile, Linse (2005) argued that the second language and foreign language are often learned from classroom environment and usually focused on the form of the language rather than on the message being conveyed. Thus, children learned the first language and foreign language in different ways.

Learning a foreign language involves four skills: speaking, reading, listening and writing. Moreover, Harmer (1989, p. 16) explained that "listening and reading skills are included as receptive skills, meanwhile speaking and writing as productive skills". All of these four skills are important, but as stated by Nunan (2003), speaking is important for children's overall language development because children learn English as they learn their native language. This is in line with what McKay (2006) believed that children learning a foreign language in formal school settings learn best by communicating primarily through oral language.

In Indonesia, English as a foreign language should be taught in an interactive way to develop a communicative competence. According to Herrell & Jordan (2012, p. 6) teaching is "giving instruction or giving

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skill in classroom surely with the material and use the appropriate technique for creating the classroom effectively”, teaching in a sequence of activities has the goals and it is planned well. Moreover, an effective technique not only gives children early opportunities for practice of routine language and basic language patterns, but also for imaginative play, action rhymes, songs, response to narrative texts and participation in narrative and simple description (McKay, 2006). Therefore, English teachers have to choose a suitable and appropriate technique so that the learning objectives can be achieved optimally by students.

One of the techniques for teaching speaking to young learners is called role-play. Moreover, Harmer (1989) believed that role-play is very important in teaching because it gives students an opportunity to practice communicating with different social contexts and in different social roles. It is one other way of getting students to speak. In role-play activities, the teacher gives information to the learners such as who they are and what they think or feel.

In relation to this, a study conducted by Shaw & McDonough (1993) found that based on their observation in the conversation class, the “role-play would seem to be the ideal activity in which students could use their English creatively and it aims to stimulate a conversation situation in which student might find themselves and gives them an opportunity to practice and develop their communication skill” (p.165).

In addition, the findings of the study conducted by Saroh (2012) in SMK in Bandung found that role-play technique provides the students with fun and motivating activities in learning to speak, it gives the students opportunity to express themselves in a forthright way. Besides, it helps the students in mastering the communication skill.

Another study conducted by Insani (2013) in SMK, grade 11 in Tour and Travel Business Study Program found that most of the students were enthusiastic in preparing and performing role-play. Furthermore, the students’ responses were predominantly positive in the contribution of role-play in the learning activity. Students agreed that role-play eased them in bridging the theory into practice and increase their motivation to speak English. They also agreed that role-play helped them in illustrating the real activity in their future work fields.

Based on the issue, this study is aimed to investigate the benefits of the use of role-play in teaching speaking to young learners,

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and the young learners' responses toward using role-play in their speaking activity through a case study.

1.2 Research Questions

In line with the aims above, the study will be conducted to address the following research questions:

1. What are the benefits gained by teacher and students from the implementation of role-play in teaching speaking to young learners?
2. How do young learners respond toward the use of role-play in their speaking activity?

1.3 Research Aims

Based on the description in the background, the study is aimed to:

1. Find out the benefits of using role-play in teaching speaking to young learners, in this case for the benefits for the teacher and students. The benefits gained by the teacher are focused on classroom management while the benefits gained by the students are focused on speaking aspects and speaking strategy benefits.
2. Find out the students' responses toward the use of role-play in teaching speaking to young learners.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The study is focusing on investigating the implementation of role-play in teaching speaking to young learners at one of the junior high schools in Tangerang. It is specified merely to find the benefits of the implementation of role-play in teaching speaking to young learners and to figure out on how the students' responses towards the implementation of role-play.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research is significant theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study is expected to be a reference to the further researcher who is interested in the use of role-play technique to improve young learners' speaking ability.

Practically, this study is intended to give some contributions to the educational field, especially in teaching English to young learners. It is expected for helping teachers to decide the appropriate teaching

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technique which creates an effective and efficient learning process that improve English young learners' speaking skill. For students, it can be useful to motivate them to learn English, be more active to involve themselves in the learning process and improve their speaking skill.

1.6 Clarification of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions are used to avoid misunderstanding:

1. Role-Play Technique

Role-play is a speaking learning activity where “the students are expected to play one of the roles in an interaction which might be reasonably expected of them in the real world” (Weir, 1990, p. 79).

2. Speaking Skill

Speaking skill refers to the process of “building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts” (Chaney & Burkey, 1998, p.13).

3. Young Learners

According to McKay (2006) “in terms of school level, young learners refer to students in primary or elementary schools. In terms of age, they refer to children whose ages are about 5 to 12 years old” (p. 83). In this study, the young learners are the seven-graders of the junior high school whose age is in range of twelve and fourteen years old.

1.7 Organization of the Paper

This research paper was organized into five chapters as follow:

Chapter I Introduction

This chapter presents a general description of the paper. It consists of the background of the study, research questions, aims of the study, the scope of the study and the significance of the study. The clarification of main terms and the organization of the paper are also included in this chapter.

Chapter II Theoretical Foundation

This chapter elaborates the main concept of role-play as a technique to encourage young learners in their speaking activity. In detail, the relevant theories of role-play, young learners and speaking are

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also provided. It also provides some previous research about the use of role-play in teaching speaking to young learners.

Chapter III Methodology

This chapter elaborates the method employed in this research. This chapter also describes the procedures of the study to answer the questions stated in chapter one. It covers formulation of the problem, research design, clarification of terms, research site and participants, data collection techniques and instruments, data analysis and also research procedure.

Chapter IV Findings and Discussion

This chapter elaborates the answers to the research questions supported by the data analysis and findings of the research. Classroom observations, interview, and document analysis were used to gain data to answer research questions. This chapter is divided into two main parts. The first part discusses the teacher's and students' benefits of the use of role-play in teaching speaking to young learners. The second part discusses the students' responses to the use of role-play in teaching speaking to young learners.

Chapter V Conclusions and Recommendations

This final chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations. The conclusions part begins with a brief description of the purpose of the study and the main findings. The recommendations are intended for the future researchers, particularly both teachers and students for the improvement of teaching speaking to young learners that can be drawn from the data presentations and discussions from the previous chapter.

1.8 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has presented the general points of the research including background, research questions, research aims, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, clarification of terms, and organization of the paper. In the next chapter, the literature relevant to this study will be further elaborated.

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