

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introduction of the study. It consists of several parts namely background of the study, statement of the problems, purpose of the study, significance of the study, and scope of the study. Clarifications of terms used in the study as well as organization of the paper are also provided in this chapter.

1.1 Background of the Study

English in Indonesian elementary schools does not stand as a compulsory subject. However, despite its position as an elective subject, majority of the elementary schools in one of the subdistricts in Cirebon offer English as one of their local content subjects. Teachers as well as headmasters are aiming to provide their students with basic knowledge of English to prepare them in learning English further in junior high school. It is hoped that the introduction of English subject to fourth, fifth, and sixth graders will open bigger chance for the students to be familiar to English lesson and to make them more comfortable to a language that is new to their lives. In spite of the schools' good intention in giving introductory lesson of English to the students, it was found out that teachers seemed confused in choosing as well as preparing the materials. Teachers' confusion arose as there is no guidance in preparing English materials in elementary school curriculum in Indonesia.

Interviews with some elementary school teachers conducted on November 14 until 16, 2016 revealed the aforementioned issue dealing with English materials selection and preparation for elementary school students. It was brought to light that in selecting materials for English lesson, the teachers took a shortcut by picking up the materials merely from two sources namely a commercial book and students' worksheet (known as *LKS* or *Lembar Kerja Siswa*), where the *LKS* served as the main source in teaching and learning activities. Additionally, it was also revealed that decision making on lesson objectives was taken only by reviewing the previous existed syllabi. An even worrisome case arose as the guideline in determining the

lesson objectives was guided by the students' worksheet. It was notified by the teachers that needs analysis had never been conducted in their schools. The term as well as its significance even sounded bizarre to their ears. Teachers' teaching workload and other administrative tasks stood as the hindrance in doing the analysis. This recent study is therefore put its concerns not only in boosting up the process of course design but also in introducing needs analysis to the teachers in general.

Dealing with course design, many experts proposed that needs analysis is fundamental and significant to course design and teaching (Brown, 1995; Carter & Nunan, 2001; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Nation & Macalister, 2010; Richards, 2001). Those experts believed that needs analysis inevitably stands as the starting point in a course design. Brown (1995) explicitly asserts that "needs analysis serves as the basis for developing a curriculum that will meet the learning needs of a particular group of students" (p.35). Furthermore, Albakrawi (2013, p.34) in commenting to this proposed that needs analysis is the first issue to be elaborated in designing a curriculum. It is crystal clear that needs analysis is a building block for teaching and learning activities to run systematically well. However, the above fact depicts unfortunate issue in which instead of using needs analysis as the guideline in the process of material selection and deciding the lesson objectives, the teachers picked the materials up from students' worksheets and made it as the guideline in deciding the lesson objectives. All these facts showed that the steps taken in the course design were in reverse. The existence of students' worksheets should have been used as supportive materials in teaching and learning activities, but not as the primary guideline in deciding the lesson objectives. Tomlinson (1998a) in Carter and Nunan (2001) believed that the function of material itself is to facilitate learning. In addition, Sari (2014, p.366) in line with Watanabe (2006, p.84) and Otilia (2015, p.55) stated that the guidelines should be based on the needs analysis. Additionally, Posner (1992) and Print (1993) all capture that decision making on lesson objective precedes the selection of content. Thus, it is crystal clear from the aforementioned statements that an ideal course design begins with a needs analysis and is followed by further steps of deciding upon lesson objective and selecting the appropriate materials.

Needs analysis as the guideline in course or syllabus design plays a significant role dealing with learners' motivation. Soruc (2012) as well as Al-Hamlan and Baniabdelrahman (2015) confirmed that involving learners' needs into consideration in designing the course creates a better possibility that the curriculum will succeed its objectives. Meanwhile, once learning does not take learners' needs into accounts, the learning process will lead to students' low motivation (Mackay & Mountford, 1985 in Albakrawi, 2013). However, despite its importance, it is evidenced that needs analysis is still neglected and bypassed by some teachers. Commenting on this issue, Richards (2001, p.32-33) proposed that learners' needs are identifiable and they are decisive to the content of a course. Additionally, Robinson (1980) as cited by Sari (2014, p.365) explains that students can be motivated to learn faster and better once the materials in teaching learning activities fulfill their needs. Teachers are therefore responsible for seeking kinds of topics, activities, as well as tasks which suit their learners best. It is clarified by Dornyei (2001) in Koltai (2012, p.48) stating that one means of improving learners' motivation is by providing relevant teaching materials compiled for them. Nation and Macalister (2010) explain their answer towards the issue by saying that "needs analysis makes sure that the course will contain relevant and useful things to learn" (p.24). Adorjan (2013, p. 164) supported this by saying that a well-structured needs analysis will enable course designer as well as teachers to design and choose an appropriate content and methodology in learning. As a result, it can be concluded that needs analysis is worth conducted since it offers essential information towards learners' preferences in their learning that further can be used as a means to improve their motivation in learning.

Several studies dealing with needs analysis and its significance towards teaching and learning have been conducted and unveiled some beneficial information gathered from the analysis. The first study conducted by Al-Hamlan and Baniabdelrahman (2015) was aimed at investigating the needs of second graders in the secondary schools in learning English in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It was revealed that students need to learn English to speak fluently, communicate with other, and to get a job. Their speaking and listening skills were also at the lower level than their writing, reading, grammar, and vocabulary skills.

In addition, Setiawan (2009) attempted to investigate international students' needs in learning English in EAP context. The findings showed that learners needed English in order to understand lectures and to understand news on TV (in New Zealand context). Meanwhile, dealing with methodology, the findings revealed that learners wanted the teachers to give feedback on their works. Furthermore, Bruggink, Meijer, et al. (2014) attempted to investigate students' additional support needs as perceived by the teachers. They involved 57 teachers in the study. Questionnaire with exploratory factor analyses identified four dimensions of students' needs namely instructional support, (on-task) behavioral support, emotional support, and peer support.

Due to the current issue dealing with English course design in elementary school level and by considering the significance of needs analysis, therefore, this study is conducted to find out students' needs in studying English as a Foreign Language in elementary schools as perceived by the teachers by hoping that this current study is able to boost and to provide better clearance for English course design for the students in one of the subdistricts in Cirebon.

1.2 Statement of Problems

Based on the above evidence from the previous data and findings which showed beneficial information that can be gathered through needs analysis, this present study is conducted by focusing the attention to the following research questions:

1. What are the needs of fifth graders in learning English as a Foreign Language as perceived by the elementary school teachers?
2. What are the needs of fifth graders in learning English as a Foreign Language as perceived by the junior high school teachers?

1.3 Purposes of the Study

By referring to the above research questions, this current study is aimed to achieve the following objectives.

1. To identify the needs of fifth graders in learning English as a Foreign Language as perceived by the elementary school teachers.
2. To identify the needs of fifth graders in learning English as a Foreign Language as perceived by the junior high school teachers in relation to how English learning in elementary school level supports English learning in junior high school level.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Pedagogically, this study is expected to give meaningful information related to a picture of fifth graders' needs in learning English as a Foreign Language as perceived by elementary school teachers. It is hoped that through those information teachers are able to decide the most suitable and appropriate materials to be implemented in English teaching and learning activities for fifth graders. It is also hoped that the information can provide teachers with more preferences in deciding upon what skills should be emphasized and what learning styles and teaching methods will better be applied in teaching and learning activities so as to promote learning improvement. Furthermore, information gained from junior high school teachers in relation to how English learning in elementary school level supports learning in junior high school level is also expected to give significance in English learning. The information is hoped to provide a clearer sight for elementary school teachers to give emphasis on teaching several elements that best support English learning further in junior high school level.

In addition, theoretically, it is also hoped that this current study can stand as further proof showing that needs analysis is significant as a building block in providing a betterment of learners' learning. It is also expected that this study can introduce teachers in general towards the process of conducting needs analysis so as to make them familiar with needs analysis. By bringing out the significances of conducting the analysis, it is hoped that in the future teachers are triggered and willing to conduct such analysis.

Furthermore, practically, this study is also expected to cater for additional information for those who intend to conduct a study with similar topic.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study concentrates on the needs of fifth graders in order to boost English course design for fifth graders in one of the subdistricts in Cirebon. In order to achieve the intended purpose, the study will gather information from both elementary school teachers and junior high school teachers. The information gained from elementary school teachers will identify fifth graders needs in learning English as a Foreign Language. Additionally, information gathered from junior high school teachers will complete the aforementioned information by providing junior high school teachers' views of how English learning in elementary school level supports learning in junior high school level. The information will be reflected within the four curriculum components namely learning goals or objectives, learning materials, methodology, and evaluation. The coverage is chosen based on the issue found from preliminary data revealing that teachers were still confused in designing as well as choosing the appropriate materials for the students. In addition, the coverage is also taken to provide a clearer view for the teachers towards the most profitable learning activities in teaching and learning so as improvement in the students' learning can be achieved.

1.6 Clarification of the Key Terms

In order to have a better clarity of the main topic as well as to avoid misunderstanding, clarification of the terminologies used is provided below.

- Needs are “the differences between what a student can presently do in a language and what he should be able to do” (Richards, 2001, p. 54). In other words, needs can be defined as the gap between students' present skill and students' target skill in learning English. In this study, needs being investigated are in terms of fifth graders' needs in learning English as a Foreign Language as perceived by the elementary school and junior high school teachers. The

needs unveiled will later be reflected and divided into the four curriculum components namely learning goals or objectives, learning materials, methodology, and evaluation. Additionally, students' difficulties in learning English will also be revealed to complete the analysis towards students' needs.

- Needs analysis as viewed by Carter and Nunan (2001) is an analysis to determine what students need to be able to do in English in their educational or professional situation. In this current study, needs analysis is a step of gathering information dealing with fifth graders' needs in terms of learning materials, methodology, learning activities as well as students' difficulties in learning English. The analysis will be conducted by having teachers' points of view towards their students' needs.
- Curriculum is seen by some people either as the expected ends or the expected means of education (Posner, 1992, p.4). As the expected ends of education, curriculum is defined as "the content or objectives for which schools hold students accountable". Meanwhile, as the expected means of education, curriculum is "the set of instructional strategies teachers plan to use" (Posner, *ibid.*). Curriculum in this study refers to the status or the position of English in elementary school in 2013 curriculum which stands as an elective local content subject.

1.7 Organization of the Paper

This paper is presented into five chapters, as follows:

CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, background of the study, statement of the problems, purpose of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, clarification of terms, as well as organization of the paper will be elaborated.

CHAPTER II : LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will discuss the theories and related research which are used in this study along with the concluding remarks of the study.

CHAPTER III : RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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*AN ANALYSIS OF THE ENGLISH NEEDS OF FIFTH GRADERS AS PERCEIVED BY THE TEACHERS
IN SEVERAL SCHOOLS IN ONE OF THE SUBDISTRICT IN CIREBON*

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This chapter will give clear discussion about the methodologies that are used in this chapter.

CHAPTER IV : FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter will discuss the findings of the study and will analyze those findings in discussion clearly.

CHAPTER V : CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter will present the conclusions and several recommendations of the study based on the analysis in chapter four.