

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives a brief overview of the whole content of the research, including the background of the study, the research questions, the aims of the study, the scope of the research, the significance of the study, the research methodology, the clarification of related terms and the organization of the paper.

1.1 Background

Young learners learn language differently from adults to some extent. First, they respond to meaning rather than to language form. It means they will learn better if the lessons focus on interaction, meaning, and fluency rather than on accuracy (Moon, 2000:5; Harmer, 2001:38). Second, children focus on here and now situation in such a way that the designed lessons should catch their immediate interest as well as students' motivation to use the language. It can be done by providing authentic materials to make children see the benefits of learning the language for their real-life situation (Brown, 2001:88). Third, children need to have all five senses stimulated which can be accomplished by providing sensory aids and physical activity, such as *role-play*, *games*, or *Total Physical Response* activities (Brown, 2001:89). The forth aspect is that children have a short attention span because they cannot do the same thing for a long time unless it is interesting, fun, and lively. Thus, providing a great variety of activities

is important to maintain their interest and attention alive (Harmer, 2001:38; Curtain & Dahlberg, 2010:19).

As children learn better through interaction which focuses more on spoken language, Freeman (1986:42) suggests that spoken language is more basic language to learn than the written form by children. The ability to use spoken language, such as to communicate or to transfer information has been widely considered as the indicator of the successful second or foreign language learning (Nunan, 2000:39; Kasihani, 2004:4). In this case, Saville-Troike (2006:177) has argued that successful second or foreign language learning is extremely affected by social experience: *the quantity and quality of input and interaction*. This view is also supported by Ellis's (2005:7-9) principles of successful instructed second language learning that suggest extensive target language (L2) input as well as opportunity for output in the form of interaction using the L2.

On the other hand, in Indonesia, English serves as a foreign language (EFL) which functions as a curricular requirement. It is only taught at school context without any immediate practical application (Saville-Troike, 2006; Lauder, 2008). Hence, Indonesian children have limited L2 exposure outside the classroom (Damayanti, 2010:8).

Moreover, English teaching practice in many EFL classrooms does not involve enough speaking activities but merely focuses on drilling grammar knowledge and reading comprehension (Howard and Millar, 2009:3). It also happens in Indonesia, where "... the teaching of English focuses only on the grammar of English, and has not yet achieved its uses" (Hikam, 2000, as cited in

Emilia, 2001:11). Thus, students learn English not to fulfill the requirement for anticipating the need of English in higher educational level or the carrier opportunity in the future but more to examination-preparation (Howard & Millar, 2009:10). In case if teachers provide students speaking activities, the students do not respond or are not willing to participate actively since there are not enough support for them to speak (Damayanti, 2010). In fact, children will be able to learn to speak English, if they have many opportunities and support to speak during the lesson (Paul 2007:76).

Concerning the issue and the importance of speaking activities mentioned above, designing appropriate lessons for children as young language learners which provide many opportunities for them to speak English is therefore needed. In this case, there is an approach called “Project-Based Learning” (PBL) which is relevant to the need. First, the project provides students authentic and meaningful learning tasks that engage and motivate them to learn. Second, the process of making the project gives spaces for students to speak during the lesson as they work collaboratively and actively with their partner. Next, the process also develops students’ knowledge and English skills (Grant, 2002; Klein, 2007; Fragoulis, 2009; Bell, 2010).

As an example, a study conducted by Gaer (1998) in an immigrant adult classroom in California found that PBL gave meaning to the learning process as well as created excitement and motivation in the classroom. It is stated that before the implementation of PBL, the students had little confidence to speak during the lesson. They were not sure that they would be able to do the project of making a

story book of their local folktale to be presented to the native children. Yet, when the project was going on, they found themselves engaged with it. Finally, they were able to speak confidently in front of the native children presenting their project at the end of the lesson. Regarding the research above, this study wants to know whether the result of that study will be similar if the approach is implemented in young learners classroom.

The writer has found a private school in Bandung which attempts to implement PBL in teaching speaking to the students. This study intends to see how PBL affects the teachers' choices in designing the speaking activities in the classroom including the purposes and the students' responses toward those activities.

1.2 Research Questions

This paper seeks to address the following questions.

1. What speaking activities are conducted by the teacher in teaching speaking to young learners through Project-Based Learning Approach?
2. What are the teacher's purposes in conducting the activities?

1.3 Aims of the Research

According to the research questions, the aims of this paper are to investigate:

1. Speaking activities conducted by the teacher in teaching speaking to young learners through Project-Based Learning Approach.
2. The teacher's purposes in conducting the activities.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This research focuses on: (1) identifying the speaking activities conducted by one private elementary school teacher in a classroom as a result of implementing PBL approach in teaching speaking to young learners; and (2) investigating the teacher's purpose in conducting the activities.

1.5 Significance of the Research

The findings of this research hopefully contribute to teaching and learning English as a foreign language to young learners, theoretically, practically, and professionally.

From theoretical view, the findings are expected to contribute to the theories of English language teaching to young learners in Indonesia and serve as a base for future studies.

As practically the findings of the research can help teacher in the classroom in teaching speaking to young learners since it gives the holistic description of how the activities are conducted, what the purposes are, and how students respond in each activity.

Finally, the findings may inspire English teacher to improve their skill and knowledge in teaching speaking to young learners to be more professional and creative.

1.6 Research Methodology

1.6.1 Research Design

The approach of this research is qualitative, particularly a case study. It was chosen since the aims of this study are to investigate the process of teaching speaking to young learners classroom through Project-Based Learning, particularly the speaking activities applied and to gain in-depth understanding of the teacher's purposes in conducting the activities (see Meriam, 1988; Yin, 1994; Lodico, 2006).

1.6.2 Data Collection

In collecting the data, this study used three instruments, namely: (1) interviews; (2) observations; and (3) documents analysis. According to Lodico, *et al.* (2006:269), those instruments are the main tools in collecting data of case study. By means of those instruments, the researcher applied triangulation to increase the validity of the data, findings and conclusions (Campbell and Frinske, 1959 cited in Cohen, *et al.*, 2005:112).

1.6.3 Data Analysis

Creswell (2008:244-262) suggests that the process of analyzing the data starts with the initial management of the data which includes: (1) organizing the data based on the categories (interviews, observations, and documents analysis); and (2) transcribing the data from the interview recording and from the videos of observation.

The process continues with the preliminary analysis of the data including reading through the entire data to gain a general sense of the data and coding the data. Finally, the process ends with layering the analysis and interconnecting the themes to present the complexity of the discussed phenomenon.

1.7 Clarification of Related Terms

To avoid misconception, in this study several terms are clarified as follow.

1. Speaking Activities

In this paper, the terms speaking activities refer to what Harmer (2001:87) calls as *Activate* exercise in which “the students are using any and all the language at their command to perform some kind of oral task.” In this sense, there should be tasks to complete by the students, such as discussion, role play, language games, etc.

2. Young Learners

Throughout this paper, young learners will be referred to children who are in the 3rd grade of elementary school whose age ranging from 8 to 9 years old.

3. Project-Based Learning

Project-Based Learning is an innovative and comprehensive instructional approach centred on the learner which teaches multiple strategies to engage students to develop their problem-solving, decision-making, and investigation skills. This approach gives a great deal for students to learn

autonomously and be responsible for their own learning. In addition, the approach demands the students to make a realistic product or presentation—in a certain period of time—which later represents what they have learnt (Thomas, 2000; Bell, 2010; Walters 2012).

1.8 Organization of the Paper

The paper has been divided into five chapters, as follow.

Chapter I

The first chapter gives a brief overview on the background of the research including the research questions, the aims of the research, the scope of the research, the significance of the research, clarification of related terms, and the organization of the paper.

Chapter II

This chapter begins by laying out the theoretical dimensions of the research, which are: (1) teaching speaking, including the elements of speaking to be mastered, the problems which commonly appear, and the principles of designing speaking lesson; (2) young learners' characteristics, particularly in relation to language learning; (3) speaking activities that are relevant for young learners according to the characteristics, (4) and Project-Based Learning which starts from the definition, the characteristics, the benefits up to the findings of several research in relation to the implementation of PBL in language learning.

Chapter III

Go on to chapter III, this chapter elaborates the methodology of the research including the research design, site and respondents, data collection, and data analysis.

Chapter IV

Chapter IV then reports the result of the research in form the description of the findings and discussion.

Chapter V

Finally, chapter V presents the conclusion of the research and suggestions for the next research as well as for teachers based on the results found by the researcher.

