

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an introduction of the research paper which describes the background of the research, research questions, aims of the study, and significances of the study. In addition, the organization of this research paper is also presented at the end of the chapter.

### 1.1 Background of The Study

English has been taught in all levels of education in Indonesian primary schools with greater compulsion, and at a steadily lowering age (Graddol, 2006, p. 88). The statement shows the emerging trend in the world of English language learning and teaching, that is teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL). The skill of communicating in English in the global world nowadays is considered as one of the must-required life skills. Despite English is no longer being included in Indonesia 2013 curriculum, young learners will get benefits from this study.

One advantage of teaching English to early ages is the aim to make young learners familiar with foreign language. It is in line with Cameron (2001) who proposes some advantages to introduce young learners to foreign languages at early age. She (2001) believes that children who have an early start development will gain advantages in some areas of language skills which are divided into two kinds namely receptive and productive. Receptive skills consist of listening and reading skills, while productive skills consist of speaking and writing skills. Speaking is an important skill especially for English as Foreign Language (EFL). Speaking is the basic human skills since they were born. However, Perego and Boyle (2001:107) states that listening, speaking, reading and writing also occur naturally together in learning events in school at all grade levels, even though traditionally they were taught separately. Relevant to the importance of English speaking skills, it is necessary to develop and increase the attitudes of EFL for young learners in speaking English, in this case English language in Indonesia.

Young learners have their own way to acquire languages. According to Lefever (2007, p.27), young learners at the transition level (ages 5–8) generally have the following characteristics: they are keen and enthusiast. They are also curious and inquisitive, outspoken, imaginative and creative, and active. Young learners like move around. They are interested in exploration, learning by doing, and natural learning searching for meaningful messages. Young learners will learn language subconsciously by including those characteristic. Young learners learn language automatically from sounds and then practice it when they speak (Brown, 2001).

However, EFL for young learners in Indonesia still has gaps; namely the limitations of teaching aids. First, young learners in Indonesia have very small opportunities in using English to communicate with others. They just implement activities from textbook and practice dialogue without real context. Therefore, with this limitation, each of them should have the opportunities to speak during the lesson. Young Learners often seem less embarrassed than adults at talking in new language, and their lack of inhibition seems to help them get a more native-like accent (Cameron, 2001).

Second, relevant to the teaching aids, teachers have important roles to make language easy to be learnt by young learners. However, not all teachers realize the importance of classroom atmospheres toward students' understanding. This leads the researcher to think about an effective media in teaching-learning process. As stated by Harmer (2001), when teaching the language, teachers should use a variety of the teaching aids to explain language meanings and constructions and engage students in a topic or as the basis of a whole activity.

Puppet, as one example of teaching aid, can be used to help young learners to communicate well with English. Puppet is a small-scale figure (as of a person or animal) usually with a cloth body and hollow head that fits over and is moved by the hand (Merriam Webster Online, 2012). Puppet is a medium tool for students to express themselves and explore the various components of the English

language (Lepley, 2001). Moreover, puppet can help students to internalize language patterns, enhance listening skills, develop risk-taking skills and student confidence, and provide opportunities for students to work cooperatively as a group. Unfortunately, puppet is a rare tool nowadays; teachers in many opportunities are more likely to utilize multimedia like video when giving the material to the students, especially in speaking skills. As a matter of fact, puppet can help students to interact with others, in a way that it can be used to teach the language functions and the social skills of greeting, responding to conversation, and initiating conversation. In addition, puppet is indicated as a good media to improve speaking skills in elementary school.

Recent studies such as Özdeniz (2000), Lepley (2001), Setyarini (2001) Reidmiller (2008), and Brown (2009) are related to the use of puppet in teaching speaking skills to young learners. Those studies analyze the use of puppet in teaching speaking to young learners, including the benefits of using puppet as the tool to increase young learners' speaking ability. Those studies describe and explain why and how certain puppet influences young learners to be brave to speak English related with their characteristics. Based on the issues above, this study is aimed to describe the use of puppet in teaching speaking to young learners, and the young learners' responses of using puppet in their speaking activity through a case study. Therefore, those concerns are within the context of English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

This study attempts to answer the research questions formulated as follows:

- 1 What are the benefits of using puppet in teaching speaking to young learners?
- 2 How do young learners respond toward the use of puppet in their speaking activity?

### 1.3 Aims of The Study

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

1. Find out the benefits of using puppet 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 towards the use of puppet in teaching speaking to young learners.

### 1.4 Significances of The Study

This study is expected to provide theoretical, practical, and professional benefits, to the following:

#### 1. *Practical benefits*

Practically, the research findings will useful for students in their speaking ability, the improvement of teaching method of English for young learners, and also for the readers who are interested in teaching speaking to young learners.

- a) The students
  - They can improve their mastery on English speaking; they will be able to speak better in English as Foreign Language.
  - They will be able to express themselves by speaking English.
- b) Teaching method of English for Young Learners program
  - To present the implication of using puppets in young learners' EFL speaking activity
  - To give new solutions to the English for Young Learner teaching and learning process, especially in speaking
  - To provide sufficient benefits of using puppet in young learners' EFL speaking activity

- To gain information about young learners' responses about the use of puppet to their EFL speaking activity
- To provide sufficient benefits between human puppet and animal puppet in the speaking activity.

## 2. *Professional benefits*

The discussion of this study may help teachers find some innovations and appropriate methods in teaching speaking skills to young learners. It can also be used as consideration to be a chosen media by language courses or schools. Lastly, the research findings will help the researcher in reflecting how to teach speaking skills by using puppet.

## **1.5 Organization of the Study**

### 1. Chapter I: Introduction

In this chapter, the paper elaborates the background of the study. It will discuss speaking becomes the focus of this study and why using puppet is important in teaching speaking to young learners. The chapter also states the research questions, aims of the study, significances of the study, clarification of related terms, and Paper Organizations.

### 2. Chapter II: Literature Review

This chapter discusses some theories about Speaking, Teaching speaking, Benefits of puppet, and Young Learners. This section also focuses on the theoretical foundations that are relevant to the present study, with puppet as a speaking stimulus for young learners as the main issue.

### 3. Chapter III: Methodology

This chapter gives clear explanation about how the study will be conducted and analyzed. It clarifies why the study needs to use puppet. The data collection and analysis will also be briefly explained.

#### 4. Chapter IV: Findings and Discussions

This chapter analyzes and discusses the findings of the study clearly. It will show the elaboration of the result of the use of puppet in teaching speaking to young learners and see whether it will be consistent to the pattern of previous result.

#### 5. Chapter V: Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter presents the conclusion and several recommendations of the study based on the analysis in chapter four. The conclusion states the answer to the research questions in the previous chapter about the use of puppet. There are also several suggestions for further research related to the use of puppet in teaching speaking to young learners.

