

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This study is intended to investigate the way used by three English teachers of three Elementary Schools in Solok, West Sumatera in planning and implementing their instruction and the way they assess their students' learning progress and achievement.

This chapter is an introductory part of this thesis which consists of seven sub-headings. They are background of research, research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, definition of key terms, and thesis organization.

#### **1.1 Background of Research**

The process of teaching learning and assessment are two sides of the same coin. Brown (2001: 420) defines, "Assessment and teaching are partners in the learning process." This indicates that both elements are two interrelated entities of equal importance. A sound research conducted by Luciana (2004) reveals that there is a gap between what the teachers taught to the students and what they assess on the part of the students. Therefore, the researcher is interested to investigate these two essential elements in relation to the ways English teachers plan and implement the instruction and the way they assess students' learning progress and achievement.

In line with the above fact, the researcher finds the phenomenon of EFL in Indonesia that views mastering English has been of great importance for recent years concerning the influence of scientific and technological development. Therefore,

there is an assumption that it will be easier for anyone to grasp ideas and gain information across the globe – which is mostly uttered in English—if he or she possesses good ability in English.

In response to that assumption, there is a growing demand of Indonesian citizens on starting teaching English at elementary school level. They believe that mastering English is one of several competences to be acquired to live in this globalization era. There is a common assumption that the younger children learn foreign languages, in this case English, the better the result would be, since, as Harmer (2002, 37) says, children learn foreign language faster than adults. A national survey on teaching and learning English at Junior and Senior High school levels conducted by Retnaningsih (2002 cited in Harun, 2005) indicates that almost all the parents interviewed by the researcher state that they wish their children to have good English competence and performance. This expectation can be fulfilled only when the students, especially young children, have opportunities to learn English appropriately.

Coping with such demand, the release of a number of decrees which then followed by relevant curriculum have taken place. First, the Decree of Minister of Education and Culture (RI/No. 0478/4/1992, chapter viii) which states that an Elementary School can add some extra lessons in its curriculum as long as they are not in contradiction with the objective of National Education. Second, a follow up Decree of Ministry of Education and Culture, number 060/U/1993 dated February 25<sup>th</sup> 1993 which states that English can be introduced to the fourth grade students of Elementary School (Suyanto, 1997 cited in Sary, 2006).

In line with the above Decrees, the implementation of 1994 Curriculum for Elementary School enables Elementary Schools' teachers to teach English as a Local Content subject to their students. The implication is that English becomes an official subject in Elementary Schools now. As a result, having included English into Elementary school curriculum, majority of Elementary Schools then have been providing English in the classroom for their students. Nowadays, teaching English at Elementary Schools has been carried out as an official subject, since it is supported by an official policy.

As a Local Content Subject, as Suyanto (1997, cited in Sary, 2006) says, the basic goal of English teaching in Elementary Schools is to make the students aware of the fact that there are international languages, in this case English, they can learn other than their local and national languages. It also aims to develop basic receptive skills (reading and listening) in spoken and written English (Huda, 1999).

In addition, concerning the teaching of English, Sinaga (cited in Sadtono, 1997: 173, cited in Sary, 2006) says that one of the most important elements in an English teaching is the quality of teachers, which includes qualifications of English and qualification of teaching methodology. The former is essential since the teachers are the model for their students. Moreover, the latter is of the same importance since it deals with knowledge of how to teach children and the ability to perform it in the classroom.

Despite the fact that many private (which then followed by public) elementary schools have applied teaching English for several years, the results of previous studies reveal shortcomings in the teaching of English to young learners (TEYL).

Those facts are among other: the teaching of English at the elementary schools studied is unsatisfactory (Suyanto, 1994, cited in Sary, 2006); what the teachers taught to the students and what they assess on the part of the students are incongruent (Luciana, 2004); the teachers could not apply most of the principles of TEYL even if they shared the understanding (Suharno, 2005); and the teachers did not consider principles of assessing young learners in assessing their students (Defianty, 2007).

Many factors contribute to the occurrence of those facts. Alwasilah (2004: 80) argues that graduates of educational universities and institutes are not specially prepared for teaching English in elementary schools. They are not provided with knowledge on psychology of children, and theories of teaching and learning appropriate for the young learners. They are not professionally ready for it and lack of field experience. Therefore, the researcher is interested to investigate the ways employed by the English teachers in planning and in implementing the instruction and the ways they assess their students ' learning progress and achievement in three elementary schools in Solok, West Sumatera.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

To meet the objectives of the study, the formulation of the research questions is broken down as follows:

1. How do the teachers plan their instruction?
2. How do the teachers implement their instruction?

3. How do the teachers assess their students' learning progress and achievement?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study are formulated based on the problems to be investigated. Thus, the purposes of this study are as follows:

1. To find out the way the teachers plan the instruction.
2. To find out the ways the teachers implement the instruction.
3. To find out the way the teachers assess students' learning progress and achievement of English.

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

It is expected that the findings of the study can enrich the literature of English teaching in Elementary School. It is also hoped to provide the teachers fruitful information on teaching and assessing in Elementary School.

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

This research aims to illustrate the process of EFL teaching at three Elementary Schools in Solok, West Sumatera. Particularly, it aims to investigate the ways the teachers prepare and implement their teaching in teaching English to their students and the way they assess their students' learning progress and achievement. This is done because as the ones who teach English in the classroom, it is the teachers themselves who prepare the instruction, apply the teaching and learning process in the classroom, and then assess their students' learning progress and learning

achievement. As a case study, the findings of this research are only true to the respondents participating in it. Therefore, there is not any effort for generalization.

### **1.6 Definition of Key Terms**

Several key terms need to be defined clearly and correctly in order to avoid misinterpretation and ambiguity. The definitions of the key terms are as follows:

1. Teaching: Brown (1987: 6, cited in Sary, 2006) defines teaching as an activity to guide and facilitate learners in learning in order to enable them to learn, and to set the supportive conditions for learning.
2. Learning: Kimble and Garnezy (1963, cited in Brown, 1987: 5, cited in Sary, 2006) define it as the result of reinforced practice and a relatively permanent change of behavioral tendency.
3. Assessment: Cameron (2001: 220) defines assessment as an analysis describing learners' learning or performance in order to provide information that can be used in evaluation. It is an ongoing process that encompasses a much wider domain in which the teacher subconsciously makes an assessment of students' performance whenever they respond to teacher's question, offer comments, or try out a new word or structure (Brown, 2004: 4).
4. Elementary students are students of elementary school who are generally six to twelve years old (Nasution, 1992: 43, cited in Sary, 2006).
5. Method of teaching is an overall plan for teaching students a certain material based on a selected approach (Richards and Rodgers, 1992: 15).

6. Strategy of teaching is a particular way applied by the teachers to enhance students' learning in order to achieve instructional objectives (Herrel and Jordan, 2004: 5).
7. Techniques of teaching refers to specific activities manifested in the classroom to promote students' learning that are consistent with the method and therefore in harmony with the approach as well (Anthony cited in Brown, 2001).
8. Students' achievement is the result of the evaluation of learning outcomes during and at the end of the term (Brown, 2004).
9. Hybrid Elementary School is a term used in Kota Solok, West Sumatera, for an Elementary School that provides the students more time allocation for learning Arabic, Islamic Religion and English Language in order they can speak both languages in daily classroom activities as well as have good moral (Dinas Pendidikan Kota Solok, 2003).

### **1.7 Thesis Organization**

This thesis is organized into five chapters. The first chapter is introduction, which highlights the basic description of this study. The second chapter deals with theoretical framework which builds up the theories and references for this study. The third chapter describes the methodology used to conduct this research. It presents research design, method of data collection, participants and sites of the study, and procedure of analysis. The fourth chapter elaborates research findings and discussion.

The fifth or the last chapter presents conclusion, limitations of the study, and recommendations.

