CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a brief description of the whole content of the research. It includes the statements of the problem, the scope of the study, the aims of the study, and the significance of the study. Clarification of terms and the organization of the paper are also enlightened in this chapter.

1.1 Background

In Indonesian context, English is a foreign language. Although it is taught from kindergarten level and has become one of the important subjects at schools, it is not used as a communication language in Indonesia. Therefore, in general the learners are limited to use English only in the classroom. In other words, students cannot use English to communicate with their surrounding outside the classroom.

This fact is supported by Xiao-yan who states that “For foreign language learners, classroom is the main place where they are frequently exposed to the target language” (2006: 5). Then, Cameron comes up with an interesting suggestion dealing with the limitation of use English in Indonesia that lack of exposure outside classroom can be taken by the teacher as considerations to maximize learners’ exposures to the language through classroom activities (2001: 199). Thus, providing plenty of language exposures for learners during the teaching and learning process in the classroom are needed to support an active use of English for students in teaching English as a foreign language in Indonesia.
Teacher talk can be used as one of alternative ways to give plenty of language exposures for learners in the classroom. Liruso and Debate (2003:140) say that teacher talk is generally the only source of comprehensible input and live target language model in classroom. There are many reasons for teachers to talk in their classroom. One of the reasons is to give instructions (Moon, 2000: 61).

In giving instructions, teachers use several ways such as modifying their language to give instructions by using lower rate of speech, basic vocabulary, more frequent pauses, declarative and repetition (Chaudron (1988) as cited in Liruso and Debate (2003: 140). In addition, Nunan (1991: 191) as cited in Liruso and Debate (2003: 141) states that modified speech is more intelligible source and potentially more helpful for language acquisition. In addition, as explained by Enright (1991) in giving instructions teachers have several language adjustments to address to young learners through nonverbal adaptation such as gestures, mimes, contextual visual aids and para-verbal such as speaking clearly, slowing pace, using pause, rephrasing, and repetition. Thus, instruction can be considered as one of teacher’s way to give comprehensible input for young learners in acquiring language.

Moreover, delivering instructions in target language is considered beneficial. As proposed by Slattery and Willis (2001:20) through English instructions, the learners are provided with language expressions for real purpose, they have the opportunity to show their understanding, they are given another chance to acquire
the language, and they also are able to understand the sounds and patterns of the language intuitively.

Teachers can use instructions as a routine and start from the simple ones. They may repeat the same words and patterns of instructions in each meeting so that the learners become accustomed to them (Paul, 2003: 37). It will be better for the teacher to do scaffolding in giving instructions. They can try from the simple ones such as using one word to give instructions such as “look!” and then try again with longer ones such as “look at the picture!” (Moon, 2000: 73). However, sometimes communication breakdowns occur while the teachers deliver instructions (Pinter, 2006: 48). Communication breakdown happens when the learners do not understand what they should do.

There are some points can be taken into consideration by teachers in order to avoid communication breakdown between the teacher and learners. Teachers can use mime (Paul, 2003: 81), and gesture (Philips, 1993:7). In addition, Liruso and Debate (2003: 3) state that drawing student’s attention, no modeling and checking students’ understanding can be teachers’ consideration in delivering English instructions.

Referring to the issues discussed above, this study tries to investigate the strategies used by a primary school teacher in giving oral instructions in EFL young learners’ classroom, the types of instructions and the students’ responses towards oral instructions.
1.2 Statement of the Problems

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the strategies used by a primary school teacher in giving oral instructions, to find out the types of instructions, and students’ responses toward oral instructions. They are guided by answering the questions:

1. What strategies are used by a primary school teacher in giving oral instructions in EFL young learners’ classroom?

2. What types of instructions are delivered by the teacher?

3. What are the students’ responses toward oral instructions?

1.3 Aims of the Research

From the earlier explanation and the proposed research questions, it is clear that the study attempts to explore the strategies used by a primary school teacher in giving oral instructions in EFL young learners’ classroom, to find out the types of oral instructions delivered by the teacher, and to investigate the students’ responses toward oral instructions. The fact that English is a foreign language in Indonesia thus it is only taught in a formal setting. Classroom is main place for learners to get exposures. Therefore, using English oral instructions can be one of alternative ways for the teacher to give language exposures. This phenomenon is so interesting to be investigated.
1.4 Scope of the Research

There are many aspects of teacher talk and classroom language that can be investigated. However, this study specifically looks at the oral instructions in EFL young learners’ classroom by investigating the strategies used by the teacher in giving oral instructions, the types of the instructions, and the students’ responses toward the instructions.

1.5 Significance of the Research

There are two significant outcomes expected from the study namely theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, the result of the research is expected to enrich the literature on English instructions by providing a comprehensive description about the practice of the English oral instructions performed by the English teacher in EFL young learners’ classroom. For other researchers, this study is expected to be used as an additional source. Practically, for the teacher, the result of the research is expected to give some benefits for the teachers in terms of practical matters on the English oral instructions in EFL young learners’ classroom by considering the students’ characteristics. Through this research, the students are expected to be able to improve their English ability, be motivated to learn English, be more active to involve themselves into learning process and apply the language for real purpose. For the management of the school, principals or policy makers, the result of the research is expected to lead to a policy to encourage the teacher to use English during teaching and learning
process or to hold a training for the smallest scale related to the use of teacher talk or classroom language.

1.6 Clarification of Key Terms

There are some significant terms in the research that are needed to be clarified to avoid misinterpretation, they are:

a. Instruction

Instructions refer to directions that are given to introduce a learning task which entails some measure of independent student activity (Ur as cited in Liruso and de Debat, 2003: 143). In this study, instructions refer to each direction delivered by the teacher orally during the teaching and learning process.

b. Young Learners

Young learners are children between 5-14 years old (Pinter, 2006: 1). In this research young learners refer to the fifth grade of primary school students, 11-12 years old.

1.7 Organization of Paper

This paper is divided into five chapters. Chapter I is about introduction. Chapter II is theoretical foundations. Chapter III is the research methodology. Chapter IV is the findings and discussion of the research. Last, Chapter V is the conclusions and suggestions.

Chapter I consists of an introduction which provides the background of the study, statements of the problem, aims of the research, scope of the research,
significance of the research. Clarification of terms and organization of the paper entitled teacher’s English oral instructions in EFL young learners’ classroom are also presented.

Chapter II focuses on the theoretical foundations from the experts that are relevant to the present study. This chapter also presents research investigation from previous researchers regarding English oral instructions.

Chapter III comprises the methodology of the research employed to investigate the strategies used by the teacher in giving oral instructions, the types of instructions and the students’ responses toward oral instructions. It includes the research design, subject of the research, data collection procedure, and data analysis.

Chapter IV provides the findings and discussion of the study. In answering the proposed research questions, the presentation is organized based on the question. Therefore, the first section discusses the strategies used by the teacher in giving oral instructions from both classroom observation and videotaping observation. The second part of the chapter presents the types of instructions delivered by the teacher. The last section provides students’ responses toward oral instructions from observation and interview.

Chapter V presents all the conclusion of the study and also provides the recommendations for further researchers and related institution concerning English oral instructions.
1.8 Concluding Remark

This chapter has discussed the importance of English oral instructions. Since English as foreign language in Indonesia therefore plenty of exposures in classrooms are needed to encourage students’ ability. For that reason, finding an appropriate way to give exposure in the classroom is needed. Instructions as one of the parts of teacher talk can be used to give comprehensible language input. The terms have been clarified to give introduction to the study and organization of this paper has been explained in order to give a brief description about the whole paper.