CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introductory explanation of the study. It covers background of the study, scope of the study, formulated research questions, aims of the study, significance of the study, site and respondent, method of the study, clarification of terms and organization of the paper.

1.1 Background of the Study

The teaching of English to young learners has become important in recent years in Indonesia. Nowadays, both parents and students think that English is an important tool of communication. It exposes the issue that teaching a foreign language to young children is very necessary and advantageous. According to Pinter (2006:32), introducing children to a new language will make their horizon getting wide and originate their early enthusiasm and their curiosity about the language. Therefore, English teachers are demanded to have ability to, plan, organize and evaluate English teaching and learning process effectively. Unfortunately, it is a fact that many teachers teaching in primary school have not got some trainings in teaching the level.

In general, there are many good approaches and techniques in young learners' teaching and learning. Unfortunately, rather than conducting the effective teaching, teachers often fail in optimizing students' achievement and seem to confront with the task in providing a wide experience for students.

Mostly, the session is filled with material explanation and numerous tasks without considering students' condition and classroom situation.

Furthermore, according to Border&Note (1992 in Rejeki 2009) effective instruction is an instruction that meets students' needs and characteristics and accommodates students' learning style. In line with Border & Note, Dryden & Vos (2000 c.f. Holil 2009) states that learning will be more effective through joyfull learning. For sure, an effective classroom ice-breaker can help teachers in creating a positive and joyfull classroom atmosphere. Many teachers put too much mechanical activities and they think it is the best way to spend the time in the classroom. Few of them put the ice-breakers in the beginning or in the middle of the lesson.

The term ice-breaker may not be as popular as warm-up. Ice-breaker means "to break the ice". "The ice" may refer to many conditions. Commonly, ice-breaker is used in a situation where people have not met yet before. In an instruction, Ice-breaker is used to help to clear the way for learning to occur by making the learners more comfortable by helping to bring about conversation.

The ice-breakers are firstly used in a meeting or seminar where the members are adults. Boredom and tiresome that easily attack adults are the main reasons to use ice-breakers in a session. So, the ice-breakers are intended to refresh the situation, reduce tension and reload the energy and enthusiasm of the members (Yusuf, 2009). Considering the positive effects, some teachers apply it in their instruction. In an instruction, an ice-breaker is used to improve students' motivation because of the problems that commonly appear in a class such as

boredom, tired, low enthusiasm, and unwillingness to study. Research proposed by Qomariah (2008) finds that teachers who applied the ice-breaker in the beginning of the lesson can improve students' motivation in learning better than those who disregard ice-breaker in the classroom.

Moreover, Qomariah (2008) discovers that most of young learners' teachers found difficulties in finding a good technique designed to get students' attention, to help students' to put aside distracting thoughts, and to get them ready to focus individually and as groups on whatever activities follow. For a humorous teacher, it might be easier to grab students' attention, but for some others, it might be the opposite.

Choosing an appropriate ice-breaker will be another tiring job for teachers of young learners. It is important since children have their own unique characters. With a suitable strategy applied in an ice-breaker session, students will be motivated and optimize their potential during the instruction. An ice-breaker is expected to bring better changes in an English class. Pertaining to the positive effect of ice-breaker activity in optimizing students' learning achievement, accordingly, this study attempts to find out the phenomenon that happens in the classroom during the ice-breaker, the strategies employed and the obstacles that might be encountered by young learners' teachers in the time of ice-breaker session.

1.2   The Scope of the Study

The present study looks at the obstacles that the teachers found during the ice-breaker activity, completed by finding the strategies applied in the ice-breaker

session in young learners' classes. Three teachers of elementary schools were selected to be observed. The study covers the whole instruction, the media used, the techniques applied, and the attitude of both the teacher and the students during the instruction and ice-breaker activity.

1.3   Research Questions

The questions are formulated as follows:

1) What strategies do the teachers employ in the ice-breaker activity?

2) What obstacles are encountered by the teachers in the ice-breaker activity?

1.4   The Aims of The Study

Given the research questions, this paper was aimed to:

1) Find out the strategies employed in the ice-breaker activity

2) Find out the obstacles encountered by the teachers during the ice-breaker activity

1.5   Significance of the Study

The result of the research is expected to be a reference for the English language teacher and for all English departement students generally, concerning the knowldege of ice-breaker activity in teaching English to young learners. Since this research is aimed at discovering strategies of how teachers conduct the ice-breaker activities, this research can provide valuable information of a real portrait of the implementation of ice-breaker for teaching English to children.

Though it was realized that there are numerous studies on strategies of teaching English to young learners, yet it cannot be taken for granted that the

study result will resemble those of other countries. Further, it was hoped that the study could enrich in teachers' knowledge and would be useful for teaching children in Indonesian EFL classroom and elsewhere.

1.6   Site and Respondents

Since this study is a descriptive study in a case study framework, in-depth information was gained from three teachers from three different elementary schools in Cimahi, namely school A,B, and C.

The three elementary schools were chosen in the study because the schools had persistently taught English since it was included as a local content in 1994. At these schools, English is taught in all grades; grade one to six. Further, it is based on the assumption that school A is considered the most favorite school in north Cimahi, followed by school B and C. The classes that are taught by teachers from school A and B are grade four, five, and six, while teacher from school C teaches all grades; grade one to grade six. The study is decided to take a look at the instruction of Grade 4, as stated in Act no.19, that English is mandated to be introduced to students of grade four, five and six.

The detailed information about the site and the respondents can be read in Chapter 3.

1.7   Method of the Study

A brief explanation about methodology of the research is described below:

1.7.1 Research Design

The study used qualitative method, and applied descriptive case study as its analysis approach. The method and the framework systematically and describe and illustrate the situation that happened on the research.

1.7.2 Data Collection Techniques

To support the study, three techniques were used in collecting the data. However, before conducting a real time observation, the study undertakes a pre-observation first in that she, for example, introduces the purpose of the research, collecting the lesson plan, interviews the teacher and records the teacher's personal data, and observing the general situation of the classroom interaction. Next, the techniques of the data collection were:

a. Examining Archival Document

To get the data, this study examined archival documents i.e. teachers' lesson plans. It was intended to find the time where teacher put the ice-breaker. It is also important to consider whether or not the ice-breaker is relates to the material being taught. The data from the documentation were identified then analyzed in detailed.

b. Classroom Observation

Observation was conducted to identify the whole sessions of instruction and the ice breaker activity particularly. This technique was able to find out the information that cannot be gained from the interview or survey (Alwasilah, 2002). Field notes were also made to note what is happening during the process of teaching and to support the results from observation.

c. Interview

To avoid misconception about what has been found in the document, the classroom observation, the interview was also utilized. The interview was aimed at finding the teachers' perception related to the ice breaker activity and the obstacles which might exist within the process of ice breaker activity hold. It was also used to find out the strategies applied in the classroom. The interview was conducted by using open ended structure interview, so that the interview session can be carried out naturally, just like daily conversation, and the interviewee were not be reluctant to tell the truth.

1.7.3 Data Analysis

The data gained from the observation, document and interviews were analyzed in several steps. More specifically, the aspects were identified with theory presented by Cameron (2001), Pinter (2006), Paul (2003), Sapp (2008), Forbes-Greene (1982), Preziosi (1989) and other related theories. They were adapted and combined in order to analyze the findings.

All of the data gained were analyzed in several steps. They were (1) Examining archival documents i.e. lesson plan (2) Checking the observation transcript, supported with the recording from videotape and field note made during the observation. (3) Analyzing and processing the data gained through interview (4) Combining the data analyzed which then lead to the findings and discussions that pertain to the research questions.

1.8 Clarification of Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, some key terms are defined as listed below.

- The term '*Young learners'* refers to primary school students grade 4 to 6, aged eight to eleven years old.

- *Ice-breaker activity* is an activity held by the teacher to initiate the teaching and learning process.

- The term *Instruction* here refers to the teaching and learning process.

1.9 Organization of the Paper

The study is organized into five chapters. The chapters are subdivided into subtopics to elaborate the given issue.

Chapter I: Introduction

This chapter provides the background of the study and other aspects related to the realization of the study, including the scope of the study, formulated research questions, aims of the study, significance of the study, site and respondents, method of the study, clarification of terms, and organization of the paper.

Chapter II: Theoretical Foundation

This part presents theoretical framework and previous studies that are relevant to the present study.

Chapter III: Research Methods

In this unit, the study describes the methodology in conducting the study i.e. choosing the respondent, collecting the data from respondents, and formulating the data.

Chapter IV: Findings and Discussion

Chapter 4 presents the data from the research study and discusses interpretation of the study.

Chapter V: Conclusion and Suggestions

It presents the conclusion of the study and suggestion to other research that can be conducted in the future