Chapter One

Introduction

This chapter presents the background of research in detail. The chapter is categorized into several sub titles as follows: background of the research, identification of the problem, limitation of the problem, formulation of the problem, objective of the research, significance of the research, and outline of the research.

Background of the research

The appropriate time for students to learn a language better is started since young age or before puberty. It is explained in the 'critical period hypotheses' by Lenneberg (1967) who suggests that in the years before puberty, a child's brain is particularly adaptable for acquiring languages, while language acquisition that takes place after puberty will be different in nature and potentially less successful. So, language learning is started since young age.

Moreover, in Indonesian educational context, English lesson has been implemented in elementary school. This implementation refers to the decree of Ministry of Education number 060/U/1993 dated on February 25, 1993 (Suyanto, 2007). Referring to that decree, students start to learn English since elementary school. Even now, English has been introduced since kindergarten.

Moreover, research shows that for children between the ages of seven to twelve, they are easy to learn specific things. Based on theory from Piaget (2001), there is a concrete operational stage which starts at the end of the sensory-motor

stage and lasts until the age of 12 approximately. In this stage, children will be difficult to learn when they have to deal with abstract thing. They will be more interested on all concrete things that they really can see and touch.

However, children only focus longer to a thing which interests them. For instance, children will give a lot of attention when they are watching their favourite cartoon in television, but they will give short attention in the classroom lesson. According to Brown (2000), short attention comes when children have to deal with material that for them is boring, useless, or too difficult. Nedomová (2007) further acknowledges that, "young learners are not able to pay their attention for more than 10 - 20 minutes and after that they start to be bored and tired" (p.17). Nedomová (2007) suggests one of the crucial activities in this stage is a game. Therefore, children at that age should be given appropriate time to play rather than to learn.

In addition, the researcher's experience in internship program found that using games for elementary school students can help researcher to teach English. At that time, researcher did internship program when she was in early semester with lack of teaching theories. So, it made the researcher wanted to explore appropriate teaching strategy for students specifically for young learners. After researcher tried to apply some teaching strategies and felt the impact on students' response, researcher found that games could be a tool for teaching English in elementary school. The effectiveness of using games can be seen from enthusiasm and participation from children in a classroom. Besides, the elementary school teacher who saw the researcher taught their students by using games also gave positive response toward teaching English by games.

Previous researchers found some strategies to teach English for young learners. For instance, first strategy comes from Harmer (2001) who states that students' engagement can be stimulated by music because music speaks directly to their emotion. In addition, the second strategy is by rhymes. According to Ara (2009), rhymes captivate young learners to associate words and phrases with meanings and help teachers convert students' natural energy and enthusiasm into meaningful learning experiences. The other strategy that can be used to teach language to young learner is by games. Yolageldili and Arikan (2011) find that games have become crucially important for both English language learners and teachers not only because they provide enjoyment and relaxation, but also to encourage students to use the target language in a creative and communicative manner. As there are evidence from the previous researches which state the benefits of music, rhymes, and games in English teaching and learning classroom, it made the researcher interested to observe one of three strategies to teach English for young learners.

In this research, the researcher chose games as effective way to make children learn with their characteristics. Moreover, the researcher investigated the perception of the pre-service teachers at English Education Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta on the use of games that they used when they were doing internship program at elementary school. In this case, the researcher chose the pre-service teachers because the researcher wanted to conduct the research with different perspective from former researchers that have been investigate on teachers' perception or they did action research or experimental research.

Identification of the problem

Based on the background of the research, the researcher identifies some problems related to English learning at the elementary school level. The best time for children to start learning a language is at their early age. In fact, English has been applied in Indonesia since elementary school level. The problem is children only focus to the thing which interests them like watching favourite cartoon but they do not give much attention in a classroom lesson. From the researcher's experience when she did internship program, she found that games could be a tool to teach English for elementary school students.

Limitation of the problem

Based on the background of the research, the researcher is interested to investigate one of the strategies which can be used to make these elementary school-age children interested to language learning activities. The strategy being focused in this research was by using games. The research was conducted at English Education Department, Faculty of Language Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta batch 2014.

Formulation of the problem

The research seeks to find out the following question:

"What is the perception of pre-service teachers at English Education Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta on the use of games to teach English for elementary school students?"

Objective of the research

This research aims at finding out the perception of pre-service teachers at English Education Department on the use of games to teach elementary school students. Researcher is interested to investigate their perception on the 'types of games', 'advantages of games', and 'disadvantages of games' as a teaching strategy.

Significance of the research

The results of this research are expected to contribute to the following parties, including the researcher, the pre-service teachers of EED of UMY, English teachers, and other researchers.

This research is hoped to benefit the researcher because it gives deep understanding related to teaching-learning strategy especially games which can be applied in teaching and learning process. Moreover, this research is one of the requirements to fulfil the undergraduate program. From this research, researcher also has more knowledge about previous findings about the use of games in language teaching and learning. Finally, researcher has much information about theories from the experts and linguistics that have done research related to young learners and games.

For the pre-service teachers of EED of UMY, this research provides information about teaching language strategy by games. It is related to the types of games, how to apply the games, the advantages and disadvantages of using games for elementary school students.

This research is hoped to inspire elementary school English teachers to give time and space for games in a classroom. A game is not only a tool to fulfil empty time of lesson but a game can also be a main activity to teach English in elementary school.

For the other researchers, it is hoped this research can be as a reference of those who are interested to do research with the same topic. The other researchers can conduct more in-depth investigation using different methodology related to the use of games and teach English to young learners like action research or experimental research.

Outline of the research

The structure of this research is organized into five chapters, which are chapter one, chapter two, chapter three, chapter four and chapter five. The content in every chapter is different from each other.

The first, chapter one is introduction that consists of seven subtitles. There are background of the research, identification of the problem, limitation of the problem, formulation of the problem, objective of the research, significance of the research, and outline of the research.

The second, chapter two is literature review. In this chapter, there are two subtitles. The first subtitle is about teaching English for young learners that consists of characteristics of young learners in learning. In second subtitles, it reviews games for young learners in language learning that include definition of games, types of games for young learners in language learning, and the advantages and disadvantages of games as a teaching strategy. In addition, there is

subtitle 'previous related studies' as additional information about previous research with similar subject. Besides, there is conceptual framework in the last of this chapter.

Third, chapter three focuses to discuss the research methodology. It consists of research design, research setting and participant, data collection instrument, data collection procedure, and data analysis.

Fourth, chapter four presents the results of the research. There are four main findings reveal from the research. Those findings are the types of games that commonly used by the pre-service teachers at EED of UMY. The consideration of EED pre-service teachers to select appropriate games is the second finding. The pre-service teachers' perception on the advantages of games as a teaching strategy is the third finding. There is pre-service teachers' perception on the disadvantages of games as the last finding.

Fifth, the chapter five discusses about conclusion and recommendation. In the first section, it discusses about the final conclusion of the research. Then, in the second section, it consists of recommendation from the researcher for some related parties. The related parties are the pre-service teachers of EED UMY, English teachers, and other researchers in similar major of the research.