

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents introduction. It covers background of the study, Problem statement, purpose of the study, significances of the study, scope and limitations of the study and definition of the key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

English as the first foreign language in Indonesia is formally studied from junior high school to university, but it is introduced in elementary school as a local content. More than ten years, there is a policy on the possibility to include English in the curriculum as a local content subject.

Because English is important to learn as early as possible, the government decides a policy that “Elementary school can add subjects (including English subject) in the curriculum, but the lesson should be in accordance with national education goals”(Listia & Kamal, 2008). The government continues that “Schools have the authority on English subject included as one of the local content (*muatan lokal*) being taught in elementary school based on the considerations and the needs of the situations and conditions from both parents and society itself” (Listia & Kamal, 2008).

As we know that English is one of the foreign languages which are taught in Indonesia, it has become more important than any other foreign languages to learn by Indonesian as stated by Lauder (2008:10) that “It is widely recognized that English is important for Indonesia and the reason most frequently put forward

for this, it is that English is global or international language". That is why English is studied by the students of elementary school, junior high school, senior high school, and university who are expected to master English in order to be able to respond to the globalization era which needs the people to be able to communicate by using English as an international language (Brewster & Ellis, 2003 in Listia & Kamal, 2008).

The implementation of teaching English in elementary school is far from idealism. There are many problems faced by the institution especially the teachers, the problems are caused by different understandings to the principles. Teaching English to young learners is not only a process of transferring a new language to children. Moreover, it needs many considerations. The considerations are related to the readiness of a school in implementing the teaching and learning process. Some schools see English subject only as a subject, which should be given to the students. English subject is seen as the demand of the curriculum from the government or educational institution. Teaching a foreign language to young learners should be given based on the students' needs because the process of teaching and learning will give effect to their next experience.

Ellis (2006) suggests that teaching grammar early is valuable because it provides a basis for the real learning that follows. Grammar was mere mechanics, which children could be taught as and when it was relevant, or which they could just be left to pick up for themselves. Worse still, there was a small body of research which claimed to show that grammar was too hard for children to learn (Macaulay, 1947 and Cawley, 1957 in Hudson and Walmsley, 2005).

English language teachers focus on grammar as a set of forms and rules. They teach grammar by explaining the forms and rules and then drilling students on them. This results in bored, disaffected students who can produce correct forms on exercises and tests, but consistently make errors when they try to use the language in context. Teachers are one of the most important parts in the discourse of education and the process of teaching and learning in schools.

Other language teachers are influenced by recent theoretical work on the difference between language learning and language acquisition, tend not to teach grammar at all. Believing that children acquire their first language without overt grammar instruction, they expect students to learn their second language the same way. They assume that students will absorb grammar rules as they hear, read, and use the language in communication activities. This approach does not allow students to use one of the major tools they have as learners: their active understanding of what grammar is and how it works in the language they already know.

Based on the study conducted by Damayanti, et al. (2008), the English language teaching in elementary school did not have much attention on children's characteristics. One of the factors causing this is the teachers' competence. Many teachers are not well-trained to teach children, they prefer teaching English focusing on grammar and translation. Such methods are not quite appropriate applied in elementary school because they require higher level of brain development. The methods are more applicable for adults for their mature abstract concept. Children need more learning experiences that expose them to what they can sense at the present.

In addition, this early study indicates that there are some things that need improvement in the implementation of English teaching and learning in elementary school, such as teachers' proficiency in English language and skills in child-friendly teaching methods and techniques. Also, assessment and media are other aspects that need perfection.

Considering that English is a foreign language in Indonesia, one of the methods appropriate to be applied is grammar-based English teaching, as suggested by Paul (2003). He uses the term *step-by-step syllabus*, which is applicable for beginners. In line with this, Cullen (2008) states that teaching grammar explicitly is a way to free the students from English language learning difficulties. However, teaching grammar cannot be isolated from its context. Grammar can be treated as the centre of learning if it is presented in meaningful contexts for children.

From the experience when the writer taught young learners privately more than three years, she attempted to present grammar to young learners that she had to face several difficulties. As it is usually not possible to avoid explaining the theory of grammar, it was a challenging task to find such ways which enable young learners to internalise the new pieces of information and encourage them to use the new skills and knowledge in practice. So that is why, the writer feels interested in their teachers' way for teaching grammar in their schools.

Teaching grammar to young learners requires an extensive knowledge of a great number of issues. It is not only crucial to be aware of various teaching methods and approaches but also it is fundamental to be familiar with the principles of the development of children's intelligence.

In the fact when the writer saw teaching learning process at Elementary Schools, most of the teachers taught English grammar in very detail but many teachers still faced difficulties if they tried to explain some theoretical background of grammar to their students because some of them did not know to tend grammar teaching at elementary school appropriately, and also almost the students felt confused with the teachers explanation of grammar because there are many different patterns and the use of it.

Some children found many difficulties while learning a foreign language, especially grammar. Novianto (2009:ii) states that one of the obstacles that the students face in learning English is Grammar lessons, because it is difficult and boring. Besides, the other reasons why children have difficulties in learning English, especially grammar, are “Children learn more slowly and forget things quickly, get bored easily, may not be motivated to learn if they are not interested” (Brewster & Ellis, 2003:27).

Based on the elaboration above, it shows that most of the research on grammar teaching is about teaching grammar to older learners. Those, being inspired by those research, this study is conducted, which aims at finding the way teachers in teaching grammar to young learners. The ways include how the teachers implement the grammar teaching, the problems are faced by the teachers in teaching grammar to young learners, and the solutions are given by the teachers to overcome the problems. Considering from the fact, it is worth analysing the teaching and learning process especially about English grammar in Elementary Schools, particularly in three elementary schools in Gresik.

1.2 Problem Statement

In line with the background above, the writer formulated the problem to conduct the study in the following chapter. The statements of the problems were:

- a. How did the teachers implement grammar teaching at Elementary Schools?
- b. What problems did the teachers have in grammar teaching?
- c. What solutions did the teachers have to overcome the problems?

1.3 Purposes of the study

Based on the problems, the main purposes of the study are:

- a. to explain the way teachers implement grammar teaching at Elementary Schools,
- b. to explain the teachers' problems in grammar teaching,
- c. to explain the way teachers to solve the problems.

1.4 Significances of the Study

This study had two views in significance of the study, they were theoretical of the study and practical of the study. The first was the theoretical of this study that was to generate the theory of English grammar teaching for young learners that it can be a literature reference about teaching children English grammar for the readers.

The second was the practical of this study that focused on describing the way teachers implemented grammar teaching at Elementary Schools, the activities done by the teachers and the students in the process of teaching-learning grammar

in the classroom and the problem experienced by the teachers and also the way how they solved the problems in teaching grammar to young learners.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study was English grammar teaching and learning process which did some activities in the classroom, there were: preparation of English grammar teaching-learning process, implementation of English grammar teaching-learning process, and evaluation of English grammar teaching-learning process.

The limitation of this study focused on teaching English grammar teaching done by English teachers at Elementary Schools that there were some teachers' activities in the class, such as: pre-English grammar teaching, whislt-English grammar teaching and post-English grammar teaching.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

In order to clear view on this study , the definitions of key words are provided as follows :

a. Grammar Teaching

Grammar Teaching is an English teacher's way to teach the ways that words can be put together in order to make a phrase or basic sentence.

b. Implementation

Implementation is to do something in teaching-learning process by doing three steps that are pre- English grammar teaching, whislt-English grammar teaching and post- English grammar teaching.

c. Problem

Problem is a difficulty or obstacle when the students still do not understand and need solution.