

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

By the end of the twentieth century English was already well on its way to becoming a genuine *lingua franca*, that is a language used widely for communication between people who do not share the same first (or even second) language (Harmer, 2007, p. 13). In Indonesia, English is a foreign language that must be learnt in school from elementary to university level. According to Muhaimin, a former Minister of National Education (cited in Saputri, 2007), one of the arguments to review foreign languages in the school curriculum is to welcome the globalization era as the language for the means of communication, which is essential to build an international relationships as well as the development and the transfer of science and technology. Moreover, some kindergartens and play groups teachers consider English as one of main subjects for their students. However, eventhough English is learnt in school since kindergarten or elementary school in Indonesia, not all Indonesian people understand English well because English is not a second language here and completely different from Indonesian language, for example: the grammar and pronunciation. Some methods are adopted to make English subject more interesting and easy to be learnt, but some learners still feel bored and think that

learning English is difficult. Hence, this is the reason for finding better and more enjoyable ways to learn English.

English consists of four skills, which are listening, speaking, reading and writing (Allen, 2005). In teaching and learning English, there are some important aspects that support the four skills above. Grammar is one of the aspects and it has been an important subject in education for a long time, with research being conducted on many different topics. It has been taught in schools for centuries. In order to be able to speak and write correctly we have to know the grammar. Again, we are supposed to have a good grammar understanding in listening and reading comprehension.

According to Crystal (cited in Mary and Vicki, 2005), grammar is the study of the way words, and their component parts, combined to form sentences. Grammar is the mental system of rules and categories that allows humans to form and interpret the words and sentences of their language. Grammar is the business of taking a language to pieces, to see how it works. Therefore, grammar is the basic of any language and cannot be ignored in language learning and teaching (Ur, 1998).

In Indonesia, English Grammar is taught since in the fourth grade. In the fourth grade, the English material (especially the grammar lesson) is getting harder for the students. Therefore, the writer chose fourth grade students as the subject in this study. Since the age of the fourth grade students are nine to eleven years old in average, they are still categorized as young learners. Young learners

are children between the ages of about 5 years old to 12 years old (Brown, 2007). According to Argondizzo (1992), young learners are those under 14 years old.

Žigárdyová (2006) states that one of the factors to be successful in language learning is young age. There are some explanations for better learning at young age. First, the brain is more adaptable before puberty than after. Then, acquisition of languages is possible without self-consciousness at an early age and also because young children have more opportunities than adults. The children are learning all the time without having the worries and responsibility of adults (Brumfit, cited in Loukia 2006).

Young learners, adolescent learners, and adult learners have different characteristic in learning. “Children learn through playing” is a sentence that has guided early childhood educators for decades. The nature of children is that they like to play and have fun than to study (Verdugo, 2007). Scott & Ytreberg (1990) states that play is a need of every child and it is an important childhood activity that helps children master all developmental needs. A story is one of the aids that can be used as a play. According to Wiehardt (cited in Verdugo, 2007), story is a sequence of events in a work of fiction as we imagine them to have taken place, in the order in which they would have occurred in life. By using stories, teachers can exercise children’s imagination. Stories are part of each of our lives almost every day. We tell each other stories about our families and our experiences; we find stories in novels and in newspapers; we watch stories on TV and in movies, we make sense of our experiences and our lives through the stories we create. In the

classroom, stories can be used by teachers to link abstract learning to concrete stories, to connect new learning to prior knowledge, to create positive learning communities, and to increase students' interest in whatever lesson is being learned. Stories are useful to be the tool of linking fantasy and the imagination with the child's real world. Stories also can enrich the pupils' learning experience. It is motivating and fun. The advantages of teaching by using stories can help develop positive attitudes towards the foreign language (Ellis & Brewster, cited in Loukia, 2006).

Most people, especially young learners, when they hear the word grammar, think of lots of uninteresting, boring rules that they were forced to learn in school. Teachers often ask, what is exactly the best way to teach grammar?

Recent studies in language teaching shows that if grammar is presented in a creative way, it can be an enjoyable learning experience where learners subconsciously 'pick up' grammar of language (Loukia, 2006). Some experts suggested that using stories is one of effective methods in teaching English, including grammar. We can use stories in a play or in any kind of creative techniques, especially for young learners. The research about teaching English to young learners through stories has been done by Loukia (2006). She showed that stories are helpful in teaching English for every skills and aspects. Loukia conducted the series of observed lessons with the 4th grade class of the 2nd Public Primary School of Volos. The class consists of twenty native Greek students

(twelve girls and eight boys). Loukia used stories to teach English of all English skills and aspects, including grammar.

Therefore, with different area and different background of the subjects, the writer would like to do a study related to the phenomenon stated above. Different area and different background of the subjects may have different finding and result in a study. In this study, the writer did a study about the effectiveness of using short stories for teaching English grammar to the fourth grade students. The writer did an experiment with the fourth grade students in SD Ikan Kerapu where the teacher taught English subject (especially the grammar) by using short stories.

Besides, the writer is also an English teacher who is teaching English in elementary school from the first until the sixth grade. The participants were the writer's students. Thus, the writer became the observer and also the teacher.

1.2. Research Question

- ❖ Is using short stories effective for teaching English grammar to the fourth grade students in SD Ikan Kerapu Surabaya?

Hyphotesis

- H_0 (null hypothesis) = the use of short stories is not effective for teaching English grammar.
- H_1 (alternate hypothesis) = the use of short stories is effective for teaching English grammar.

- ❖ What kind of short stories which are effective for teaching English grammar to the fourth grade students in SD Ikan Kerapu Surabaya?

1.3. Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to examine whether the use of short stories is effective for teaching English grammar and to find out the kind of short stories which are effective for teaching English grammar to fourth grade students in SD Ikan Kerapu Surabaya.

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study is expected to contribute to the discussion of foreign/second language learning. It is also expected to give meaningful contribution to the teachers and elementary school students in teaching-learning English. The teachers could know the appropriate way to teach English subject, especially the grammar.

1.5. Scope and Limitation

This study focuses on the effectiveness of using short stories for teaching English grammar and the kind of short stories that effective for teaching English

grammar to the fourth grade students in SD Ikan Kerapu Surabaya. The result found from this study may not be generalized for the whole grammar materials because the observation was held only in six meetings (including pre-test and post-test) and those must be based on the syllabus and RPP (lesson plan) . The grammar materials taught were about simple prepositions (for example: in, on, of, to, etc.) and sentence formation (changing positive sentence into negative and interrogative). Since the condition of SD Ikan Kerapu is different from another school, the similar study which is conducted in different schools may have different result.

1.5. Definition of Key Terms

Young Learners : children between the ages of about 6 years old to 12 years old
(Brown, 2007)

Short Stories : a short sequence of events in a work of fiction as we imagine them to have taken place, in the order in which they would have occurred in life (Wiehardt, cited in Verdugo 2007)

Teaching : process of transferring knowledge (Harmer,2007)

Grammar : the study of the way words, and their component parts, combine to form sentences (Crystal, cited in Mary & Vicki, 2005)

Effectiveness : the actual or existing of producing the results that one wants
(Oxford Dictionary, 1995).