CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I.1 Background of the study

English is an important subject to learn for most people in the world. In many countries nowadays, learning English is the primary sector; therefore, students are expected to understand the language. However, English language is not a mother tongue for people in many countries so it is difficult for the students to comprehend. Huebner (1985); Parrish (1987) & Murphy (1997) state that a substantial research of the English system acquisition as a second language is difficult to be learnt.

Students need learning English language for their high level education and it is also useful to find a good job in working field. Dornyei (2001, p.5) states that in the vast majority of cases learners with sufficient motivation can achieve a working knowledge of an L2, regardless of their language aptitude or other cognitive characteristics. However, there are fewer compromises on the concepts of motivation and types of motivation. Deci and Ryan (1985) and Vallerand (1997) explain about extrinsic motivation which is commonly associated with instrumental orientation and intrinsic motivation with integrative motivation. Intrinsic motivation is generally described as behavior performed for its own sake in order to experience pleasure and satisfaction. Games can improve learning for it feels a joyful of doing particular activity or satisfying one's curiosity. While extrinsic motivation involves performing behavior as a means towards an end, that is, to receive some extrinsic reward (e.g.

11

good grades) or to avoid punishment. Although extrinsic rewards can be less effective than intrinsic motives, both motives play a role in determining learning behavior. The goal is to develop learners who are self-directed and self-motivated because the activity is interesting in itself and also achieving the outcome is important.

Learning has elements in common with both work and play as Cook (2000) states that the most fruitful approach is not to separate play and work, and then force learning to belong to one side or other but rather to view play, work, and learning as triad :
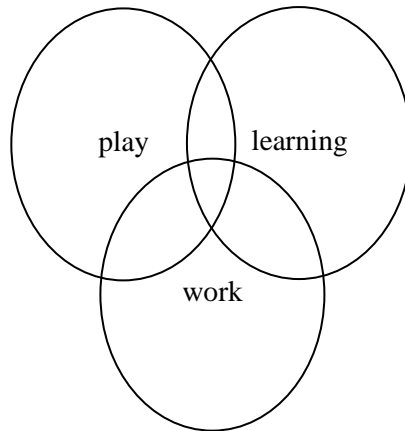
Learning a foreign language has to be enjoyable and does not put extra burden for the learners as Kubanek-German (1998:194) points it out. Therefore, teachers are expected to give children or learners as many ways as possible, an appetite to learn English in interesting and fun ways. The students know that English language is very important nowadays and it is useful for their future.

However many students still find some problems to understand English words. Learning language is not an easy thing to do. It is supported by Leech (1975,

12

p.1213) who says that language is not easy to be learnt by most people. As a result, the students will not be ready to speak, to read, or to write for they do not know the meaning. Thus, the students will feel that English lesson is monotonous and unexciting.

Engagement with games make them interested and enjoyable to join because engagement concerns with all the qualities of experience whether this is a sense of immersion that one feels when reading a good book, or a challenge one feels of playing a good game, or the fascinating unfolding of a radio drama (Benyon and Turner, 2005). Games and their rules will increase a value for young people to interact one another and strive for success. Young people or children are easier to get interaction when they are playing because they often have more time and enthusiasm than do adults for finding ambiguities and inconsistencies. As Rao (2002) stated that children may find games too trivial an activity for the serious task of learning or not appropriate for adult learners. Students will be more interesting with short-term goals because it brings more motivation than long-term goals such as winning a game is more motivating than painting a picture.

As Malone (1980) argued that the use of obvious, compelling, and adaptable goals, coupled with an uncertainty of achievement of these goals, provides a ways of creating appropriate challenge. Teacher-centered instruction is not always interesting teaching method for some students. Teachers must be creative to raise up English learning so that students will find it enjoyable to study. Gaudart (1999) suggested that such attitudes toward the use of games in the language classroom may result from a

tradition-centered instruction and perhaps a lack of teacher awareness of how games can facilitate the language learning process. Beedle & Wright (2007); Mc. Farlane, Sparrowhawk & Heald (2002) mentioned that gaming offers teachers resources that they can use to make their subject matter come alive. Therefore, playing games can make teachers observing the students' strategies of how to solve a problem in action and evaluate students' performances.

Games can be used in teaching many aspects of a language, including grammar. In English language there are many grammatical items to be learnt. One of them is simple present tense. This tense is important to use for daily activities, to ask about the information, and to enjoy reading as a leisure time activity to discover the world. Teacher usually gives some drills to help the students to control the Simple Present Tense. In this case, the teacher begins to provide a pattern and some examples, then, give the drills, after that the teacher asks the students to solve cases in writing, asks them to find the pattern of Simple Present Tense. The writer finds that some students do not get pleasure of studying the Simple Present Tense because the teacher teaches the grammar uninterestingly. Therefore, the students get bored easily because the students only do the exercises from the teacher.

There is one major advantage to using games in learning simple present tense, and that is the opportunity for practicing the grammar. Games allow learners to fully use the language that they have learned, participating in the communication throughout the game. With practice comes progress, with progress comes motivation, and with motivation comes more learning. Therefore, through games learners will get

14

information, assimilation, and release tension which increases coordination and will be able to think quickly and fully concentrate to analyze a situation. Csikszentmihalyi (1975) explains that when people play games, they are in a state of flow and are fully immersed in what they are doing in that optimized experience.

In this study, the writer examines the use of games to teach English to elementary students because as Wright (1984) states, "Games help and encourage many learners to sustain." Similarly, Khan (1994, p.33) says that games will make the students more interactive and more lively in class. That is why, the writer is interested in finding out whether this technique is appropriate or not.

I.2 Statement of the problem

Based on the background explained above, the study attempts to find the answer to the following question:

Is the use of games improving the students' of SDN Tenggilis Mejoyo scores in learning the simple present tense?

Hypothesis

The writer uses two kinds of hypotheses to prove whether there is a significant difference between the groups or not. The hypotheses are:

1.   The Null Hypothesis:

There is no significant difference between the achievement of the students who are given grammar games as a means to teach Simple Present Tense and the achievement of the students who are given reading passages.

2.   The Alternative Hypothesis:

There is significant difference between the achievement of the students who are given grammar games as a means to teach Simple Present Tense and the achievement of the students who are given reading passages.

I.3 Objectives of the study

The objective of the study is to find out the using of games to improve the students' scores in learning the simple present tense.

I.4 Scope and limitations

It is necessary to limit the scope of the study. The writer focuses only to the teaching of Simple Present Tense. The participants are two classes of elementary school of SDN Tenggilis Mejoyo. One class is an experimental group and one class is a control group. The writer limits the grammar about Simple Present Tense only.

I.5 The significance of the study

The writer hopes that the result of this study can encourage English teachers to use games in a class for teaching Simple Present Tense, in order to avoid the students' boredom. However, the teachers must know when and how the games

16