

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a general description of the paper. It covers the background of study, the statement of problems, the objective of study, the significance of study, and definition of key terms.

A. Background of Study

Language has important roles to develop intellectual, social, emotional aspects and to determine success in studying all subject matters. It expectedly helps the student to reflect their experiences to show their idea and feelings and also to understand any kinds of meaning.

The important of language also mentions in Qur'an Ar-Ruum verse 22 as follow:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَأَلْوَانِكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ

فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ لِلْعَالَمِينَ

Based on the verse above it tells that how important the language. God created so many languages so that every human in the world can communicate each other to exchange the information in their daily life.

There are many languages in the world. English, then, is chosen as the first foreign language to be learned by students in both formal and non-formal education in our country. In Indonesia English is a foreign language, but it is very popular, it is taught in all levels educations stages. In many years, teaching foreign language for children is seen as something additional to the normal curriculum of the school system. Increasingly, educators have come to recognize the importance of starting foreign language learning at an early age.

One of the approaches that is suitable for young learners is theme-based approach. Theme-based is an approach of organizing teaching around themes or topics making it possible to integrate instruction across core areas such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Thematic units are designed to encourage students to delve deeply into topics developing both an awareness and understanding of existing connections across ideas.

In addition, Cameron believed that (2001, p. 198), theme-based approach suits the way young learners naturally learn. It provides lots of linked activities that allow students who commonly have high enthusiasm to participate actively in teaching and learning process. Hence, it is teachers' responsibility to design the whole activities as meaningful and attractive with the purpose of stimulating learners' curiosity to be involves within something rather than only keep silent and listen to their teacher's explanation. In the use of theme-based approach, the teacher might be challenged since they need to be able to design their own material in which text books are only for additional source.

Theme-based is regarded as an approach that is suitable to be applied in teaching young learners since “the use of this approach offers exciting possibilities for young learners and their teacher” (Cameron, 2001, p. 197). As an example, there was a previous study by Rahmawati (2014). The study focused on students’ responses toward the use of theme-based approach in English for young learners’ class. This research was conducted by using action research to 35 students in grade three in one of elementary schools in Bandung. As the result, it was revealed that the student responded positively to the activities presented in the classroom by actively participating in each activity. In accordance with the result, it was suggested that teacher take into account the use of theme-based approach in teaching young learners since it leads to the positive response from the students.

The early age education for children mentions in Qur’an Luqman verse 13 as follow:

وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ

This verse contains the education in early age education for children, where Lukman Al-Hakim educated his son starting from early age, because basically every child is pure, therefore what the children learn in early age is very influential for children future.

Teaching English for young learners will very completely different with teaching English for adult. Young learners are unique. They are different with adult, they have very different needs, interest and abilities from adult and more enthusiastic than adult in language activity. In Indonesia, interest in teaching English to young learners has been steadily growing in recent years. Many parents

believe that by studying English from early stage their children will get a better future. Because of that the Indonesia Ministry of Education has begun to respond by introducing English as a foreign language in elementary school, even in kindergarten.

Nowadays, some kindergartens in Indonesia have added English as an extracurricular subject for the students to support the skill building in early age. Besides, the teaching of English in a kindergarten is for facilitating learners to be more prepared and confident to learn English in the higher level of education. As stated in the Kindergarten's Curriculum Guidebook, the functions of a kindergarten are to train, build, and develop all children's potentials maximally to reach behaviour and basic competences which are suitable with children's development level to prepared children in the next education level. So, when students continue their studies they will have some basic knowledge of English.

There are some benefits in some aspects of introducing English as a foreign language in the kindergarten. *First*, it offers the children opportunities to widen their horizons and awaken their early enthusiasm and curiosity about language (Pinter, 2006, p. 32). Children are more sensitive to sounds and rhythm of new languages and they enjoy copying new sounds and patterns of intonation. Those facts give more opportunities to young language learners to produce a native-like pronunciation. *Second*, young children learn easily. Young children learn better and more easily than older children (Brewster, 2002, p. 1). Moreover, if the teacher introduces English to children, the children will get an early start which means they have longer duration of learning. They will easily master

English and use it in their future life. Lastly, teaching English at primary level develops self-confidence and communication skills. This relates to its function as a means of communication. Therefore, by mastering a language the communication skill will be better and the self-confidence will improve.

Knowing the fact that earlier introduction of English is more beneficial in some aspects, some school stakeholders agree that introducing English in the kindergartens is worth doing. Therefore, school stakeholders provide English as an extracurricular activity. It is important to note that teaching English as a foreign language to young learners is not like teaching adults. It means that the material used should be appropriate with the student's characteristics and developmental level. Students who are in kindergarten are suitable for introducing the basic of English that is vocabulary.

Introducing new vocabulary earlier to the students is better. It makes them know and understand a lot of vocabularies. Inadequacy of vocabulary will obstruct the students' chances to speak, listen, read, or write. It is also the key aspect of language learning which consist of a list or set of words that individual speakers of language might use for speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Without an extensive vocabulary, students will be unable to use the structure and functions they have learned for communication.

Teaching English for kindergarten in South Kalimantan is still rare. One of kindergarten that has taught English is Raudatul Athfal Ulumul Qur'an Al Madani Banjarbaru. This kindergarten is selected to be a research location, it is because it has added English as an extracurricular subject and it is one of the best Islamic

kindergarten in Banjarbaru. RA Ulumul Qur'an Al Madani is an Islamic kindergarten under the guidance of Religious Ministry of Republic Indonesia. In this kindergarten, students' ages are varied from five until six years old and come from different social background. The approach that is used in teaching process at this kindergarten is theme based approach. It is important to be researched because according to the mandate Curriculum of KTSP that the thematic learning model is one model of curriculum implementation are recommended to be applied in education, especially kindergarten.

Based on the background of study, the writer takes the title **“THE USE OF THEME-BASED APPROACH IN TEACHING YOUNG LEARNERS' VOCABULARY AT RA ULUMUL QUR'AN AL MADANI GUNTUNG MANGGIS BANJARBARU ACADEMIC YEAR 2015-2016”**.

As the final point, this research represents the use of theme-based approach in Raudatul Athfal Ulumul Qur'an Al Madani Guntung Manggis Banjarbaru. This research addresses to find out the use of theme-based in teaching young learner's vocabulary and students' responses in the use of this approach.

B. Statement of Problems

The writer conducts the study to see how the use of theme-based approach. The statement of the problem can be formulated to the specific research question as follow:

1. How is the use of theme-based approach in teaching young learners' vocabulary?

2. What are the students' responses toward the theme-based approach that is used in teaching their English vocabulary?

C. Objective of Study

The study aims to find the answer to the questions stated on the problem statements above. Therefore, the objectives of the study are:

1. To find out how the use of theme-based approach in teaching young learners' English vocabulary.
2. To find out students' responses toward the theme-based approach that is used.

D. Significance of Study

The writer expects to give some contributions to teachers, students, schools, institutions, governments and other researchers. The significances of this study are:

1. The English Teachers of Kindergarten

This research can help the English teachers in Kindergarten to improve their performance in teaching. Besides, the teacher can select the materials for the students based on the students' needs and characteristics.

2. The Students of Kindergarten

Hopefully, the children of kindergarten can enjoy the activities in teaching English process. Concurrently, the objective of giving English to children can be achieved.

3. The School RA Ulumul Qur'an Al Madani

The research is expected to be useful information for school about the use of this approach in teaching foreign language for young learners. Additionally, it is to be a reflection for teaching and learning process at RA Ulumul Qur'an Al Madani.

4. The English Education Department's student of IAIN Antasari

The results of this study are expected that can be a new information for other English Education Department students about the approach in teaching young learners. It can be used as a useful reference for them in writing a thesis related to materials development in teaching English for young learners.

5. The Government of Indonesia

English is still rare as an extracurricular that is taught in kindergarten. The result of this study is expected to be able to encourage the government to write specific English policy for all departments of Kindergarten in Indonesia.

6. The other researchers

This study can be a useful information for other researcher. Additionally, the other researchers also can use the approach as an alternative resource in designing their own materials in the similar study.

E. Definition of Key Terms

There are some definition of key terms that are related to the title. Here are several terms used that are clarified to avoid misconception and misunderstanding:

1. Theme-based approach in this study refers to the approach that is used to teach English in order to teach young learners' vocabulary. Mumford (2000, p. 4) stated that theme based units are a vehicle for teaching a range of skills and content by integrating curriculum areas around a topic. This approach of teaching links curriculum strands and capitalizes on children's interest, creating a sense of purpose and community in the classroom. By building on their interest and life experiences, young people's attitudes, skills and knowledge are developed in meaningful ways.
2. Teaching in this study refers to teaching vocabulary for young learners. Wells, G. (1982. P. 45) defined teaching by as cluster of activities that are noted about teachers such as explaining, deducing, questioning, motivating, taking attendance, keeping record of works, students' progress and students' background information.
3. Young learners in this study refers to students in kindergarten school who learn English as a foreign language. Their ages are varied from five until six years old. Pinter (2006, p. 2) categorizes a young learners as children at pre-school or in the first couple of years of schooling.
4. Vocabulary in this study refers to all the words that the students learn. Hatch & Brown (1995, p. 130) stated vocabulary is the list of words that speakers of a particular language use.
5. RA Ulumul Qur'an Al Madani is an Islamic kindergarten which is under the guidance of Religious Ministry of Republic Indonesia. It is located at Guntung Manggis Landasan Ulin Banjarbaru, about 30 miles from Banjarmasin City. In

this kindergarten, English is one of extracurricular that are taught. The duration of English teaching is 2 hour until 3 hours per week. It is taught based on the theme and the theme is changing every month.