

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

English as a foreign language has become very important nowadays in Indonesia. Mastering English has become one of qualifications in applying for a job. This situation indicates the need of English in Indonesia society. To achieve higher competence in English, the learning of English should be done as early as possible in the young age.

Curtain and Dahlberg (2004:1) state that children are natural language learners so they can acquire any language easier and quicker than adults. As the implication, children must learn one more subject that is English language in their elementary school. Santrock (2003:62) believes that elementary school children have already had the abilities to learn vocabularies, structure rules and language meaning. English learning in the elementary school does not depress the children but it develops their natural abilities.

Since the academic year of 2004-2005, the government has applied the new curriculum, namely Competence-Based-Curriculum, in order to produce high competent human sources in Indonesia. Especially in English subject, competence-based-curriculum is implemented so that the students will have competitive and comparative qualities not only based on national standard but also on international standard (Kurikulum Berbasis Kompetensi Pelajaran Bahasa Inggris, 2001:6). Based on this curriculum, the students are expected not only to master the English itself but also to use it communicatively with others. Practically, student-centered activities are

demanding by the Competence-Based-Curriculum classrooms where students are active in the learning activities.

The curriculum is based on constructivism theory. Learning environment should support various interpretations of the reality in the world, knowledge and meaning construction, and context rich and experience-based activities. The learning is not a matter of studying the subject but includes using and connecting the subject in their real life (Kaplan, 2002). The students are engaged in active learning. Each of them constructs knowledge differently so they need to interact with their peers, teachers and families to understand the knowledge completely.

Based on constructivism and Competence-Based-Curriculum, teaching reading is useful in helping young students to master English language. According to Santrock (1999: 292), reading plays important role in children's language and cognitive development because it covers not only the needs of vocabularies, grammar, listening, speaking, writing skills but also the information processes of world understanding. Reading supports us with wide ranges of vocabularies and various uses of grammar patterns. Through reading, students can classify and identify the phonemic sounds and pronounce them correctly. Knowledge or information about the world or language that is implied in the passage supports their abilities in writing. Similarly to Berk (2001:450-451), children learn new knowledge of language and world through reading. Reading is not simply reading groups of words but it is deeper beyond that.

In teaching young students reading, teachers usually ask them to sit still and read the passage aloud or silently. This kind of activity cannot be applied in teaching children reading. More interactive and attractive technique is needed to create

learners' interest toward reading. Teaching reading to young learners should be in non-threatening and enjoyable activities so they learn to read English in fun way so through reading learners do not only learn but also play. The learning activities should provide opportunities for them to actively use the English in social interaction (Donaldson, 1978). Based on these principles, Jigsaw, one of Cooperative Learning techniques, is the appropriate technique in teaching young students.

Cooperative Learning is not a matter of grouping the students to work together but students work together to learn and be responsible for their teammates' learning as well as their own (Slavin, 1990). As one of the techniques in Cooperative Learning, Jigsaw has the same basic idea in teaching. Jigsaw enables each student of a group to specialize one part of learning unit, so each student is essential for the completion of a unit. Each part is essential so each learner is essential too in the learning process. Jigsaw develops not only the teamwork skill of students but also the depth of knowledge (Aronson, 2006). Jigsaw lets the students be active and interact with their peers. In this activity, each learner is the expert not only the teacher. Jigsaw technique brings opportunities for the students to learn maximally on their own to grow their own competence.

Some studies about Jigsaw were done, and it was found that there was an improvement of students' achievement and social interaction in multicultural society (Aronson, 1978). Aronson found out that this result not only for higher education level of learner but this happened to the young students. Some studies about Jigsaw were conducted in high level of education. Kurnia (2002) and Sania (1998) studied the effect of Jigsaw on the reading achievement of senior high school. They found the same result that with Jigsaw, students reached higher achievement. There is no

further study about Jigsaw in elementary level. No study has been done to reveal students' perception on Jigsaw technique. The writer therefore, conducts this study under report.

The writer conducts this study to the elementary school students who have never experienced Jigsaw. They do not have any perception of what Jigsaw is. The writer more particularly wants to reveal elementary school students' perception on the implementation of Jigsaw after the students have experienced it for three meetings in their reading class. The writer concerns about students' perception because in the teaching, teachers must see from the learner's perspective so that the teaching-learning activities can run effectively especially in teaching young learners.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the background of the study, the writer formulates the research question as follows: "What are the elementary school students' perceptions on the implementation of Jigsaw technique in their reading class?"

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The writer conducts this study in order to reveal students' perception on the implementation of Jigsaw technique in their reading class. The writer intends to reveal the strengths as well as the weaknesses that students think they get from learning with Jigsaw technique.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is a survey performed to reveal the result of Jigsaw implementation. Particular strengths and weaknesses can then be depicted in order to implement Jigsaw technique better in the elementary level. This study is conducted to encourage teachers of elementary school to use Jigsaw in their classroom activities in creating student-centered classroom.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

This study is conducted to Elementary school students of the fifth year in the academic year of 2006-2007. The fifth year students of Elementary school are old enough to have a discussion in groups. They are already able to use both active and passive language. This study is focused more on students' perceptions on the implementation of Jigsaw technique in reading class.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding in learning this study, the writer presents the definition of the key terms as follows:

1. Constructivism theory

It is a theory that emphasizes the building or the constructing of meaning and understanding of reality that occur in the human mind when they learn.

2. Cooperative learning

Cooperative learning is a group of learning that is organized so that each student in the group can exchange information and increase his own learning and also others.

3. Jigsaw

It is a technique to provide an excellent learning environment for the acquisition of language through relevant content, the development of academic skills through carefully structured reading activities, and the exploration of relevant content through use of purposeful talk in the classroom. Aronson suggests that students are grouped in 4 up to 5 students, namely 'home group'. Each student is assigned to read different part of reading text. Students with the same part make a group called an 'expert group'' to discuss and master their own part. Then they go back to their own 'home group' to exchange the information. All members of group should understand the whole text. Every member should be responsible for his or her own part and responsible for the success of his or her teammates in comprehending the text (Lie, 2001).

1.7 Theoretical Framework

This study aimed to know elementary school students' perceptions on jigsaw technique in their reading class is based on some theories. They are constructivism theory, language development theory, reading theory, schemata theory, teaching reading to young learners, cooperative learning and Jigsaw. Constructivism theory supports the idea that learners should be the doer during the lesson to use and connect the new knowledge in their real life. Based on the theory of language development, elementary school students are already able to use both active and passive language. These two theories support the idea that they can be assigned to discussion in cooperative groups.

Cooperative learning makes learners collaboratively communicate and discuss ideas or information. There is one technique of cooperative learning to teach reading. In Jigsaw, the learners are assigned to master different parts of a unit so they depend on each other to complete the whole unit. Those theories will be elaborated briefly in Chapter 2.

1.8 Organizational of the Study

This study is a part of an umbrella research which is a combination of four related studies. The writer conducts this study to reveal Santa Theresia 2 and Yohanes Gabriel students' perception on the implementation of Jigsaw in their reading class. The other study which is conducted by Mrs. Siti Mina Tamah concerns about students' interaction on the expert group discussion. Ellisa Yani Widjaja conducts the study about the effect of Jigsaw technique on Santa Theresia 2 students' reading achievement. Ong Ervina Larissa Susanto does similar research to study the effect of Jigsaw technique on Yohanes Gabriel students' reading achievement.

This study particularly consists of five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction that provides clear description about background, problem and purpose of this study. Second chapter is review of related literature, which covers supported theories of this study. The third chapter describes research methodology used in this study. The fourth chapter is the analysis of the data to get the finding of this study. The last chapter is conclusion and suggestions for further study.