

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Research

Together with the development of science and knowledge, English is considered as an important foreign language in the whole world. All countries take some kind of efforts and try to find the most effective way dealing with improving teaching and learning English in their countries, as they believe that English can help people live easier in this globalization era. As a result, thoughts about teaching and learning English develop as research about that is held more and more everywhere in the world.

Realizing that, the Ministry of Education in Indonesia gives the rules and guides dealing with teaching and learning English as a foreign language. As folk wisdom said that learning will be successful in early ages, the Ministry of Education in Indonesia believes that teaching English in primary schools is an important thing even when it is just included as a local content subject in Indonesia. Therefore, the handbook of Teaching English Guide in Primary Schools (*Pedoman Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris di Sekolah Dasar*) was published in 2008 as a handbook in conducting English teaching.

Teaching English in the early ages is believed as an effective way because children are different from adults in terms of cognitive, emotional/social, physical and moral attributes which develop gradually. Children are the most successful learners. Piaget (in Pinter, 2006) states that children construct knowledge for

themselves by actively making sense of their environment. Active learning, thus, is referred as 'constructivism'. In the children's active learning, they do 'assimilation' first and 'accommodation' after that.

Dealing with teaching English in early ages, listening is given a high priority. Listening is the skill which children acquire first because children often cannot read and write all yet, or not with much confidence (Scott & Ytreberg, 2004). Therefore, Pinter (2006) points out that English should start with an emphasis on listening and the speaking. Dealing with that, Nunan (in Nation & Newton, 2009) states that it has been claimed that over 50 percent of the time that students spend functioning in a foreign language will be devoted to listening. It is because listening is a language skill that used frequently in everyday life. Researches Rivers and Morley (in Xu, 2008) purpose that we listen twice as much as we speak, four times as much as we read, and five times as much as we write.

Rost (in Xu, 2008) agrees Nunan's statement, and points out, of the four language skills –speaking, listening, reading and writing–, listening is the most critical for the language learning at the beginning stages. Rost, Feyten and Mendelsohn & Rubin (in Xu, 2008), say that listening is the highly integrative skill and research has demonstrated its crucial role in language acquisition. In addition, Nation & Newton (2009) state that listening is the natural precursor to speaking; the early stages of language development in a person's first language (and in naturalistic acquisition of their languages) are dependent on listening. Similarly, Postovsky, Winitz & Reeds, and Gary (in Xu, 2008) believe that large amounts of listening practice before speaking or reading may prepare the learner

to acquire a second language with a greater efficiency than if he or she was taught all the skills simultaneously. That is why listening is assumed greater and greater importance in foreign language classrooms.

As what is pointed out by Linse (2005), auditory i.e. songs, chants, poems, read aloud, etc, is one of children learning channel. In that channel children's listening skill is developed and improved. The teacher who wants to use this channel can choose the most appropriate input to children. Dealing with that, Brown (1996) argues that listening an interesting story tends to be an appropriate way to teach English for children especially in improving the listening skill because stories are very repetitive. Moreover, there are big pauses between each tone group so that children have plenty of opportunity to process the content of the tone group but within each tone group the correct rhythm of stress and unstressed is preserved and a certain amount of normal phonetic simplification goes on.

In addition, stories are fun that children can enjoy them. By having 'listen and enjoy' activity which can have its regular daily or weekly time, the listeners listen to the continuation of an interesting story in much the same way as people follow a television serial (Nation & Newton, 2009). Supporting that idea, Pinter (2006) states that listening to stories, rhymes, and songs can also lead to learning the words' phrases by heart and this can be very useful because songs and rhymes contain reasonably fast connected speech in English, with shortened sounds. Easily stories, rhymes, alliteration and word play help children to hear, identify,

segment and blend phonemes in words (Grugeon, Dawes, Smith and Hubbard, 2005).

In Indonesia, generally, storytelling for primary school students is rarely conducted by teachers. One of many reasons for not conducting storytelling to them is that teachers think an activity called storytelling is for kindergarten kids, not primary school students. Therefore, storytelling is conducted in certain schools occasionally. It depends on the undersanding of the importance in conducting storytelling to improve English skills in the schools by the English teacher.

Grade V-B of SD Muhammadiyah Sagan where researcher ever observed in is one of the examples. SD Muhammadiyah Sagan cares a lot about students' development in learning, including English. However, the researcher faced some problems dealing with English learning and teaching there. One of them is that the teacher seldom conducts storytelling in English classroom.

English is learned there as the local content subject. In grade V-B, the English teacher used some media in teaching English like videos, games, cards, etc. Most of students were smart and so active. However, according to the students based on interviews held by researcher, the teacher seldom tell a story in English. The teacher used other media, particularly videos. It can be said that storytelling could be a 'new' activity that improve the English clasroom.

Dealing with that, *Departemen Pendidikan Nasional* (2008) argues that listening skill is the skill which seems difficult to be taught because of the limitation of children vocabulary. Therefore, without any helps i.e. teacher's facial

expression and body language, children are difficult to understand instructions, questions and even compliments in English. It was happened also in grade V-B of SD Muhammadiyah Sagan. Realizing that condition and also the importance to teach listening in early ages, it is assumed that storytelling that may include teacher's facial expression and body language could be an activity that can be applied to solve the problem in grade V-B of SD Muhammadiyah Sagan.

B. Identification of the Problem

Observations and interviews were held to identify problems that occurred in the class. The researcher did observations twice (January 31 and February 7 of 2012) and interviews after the observations. After that, she wrote in her research diary to memorize the problems that occurred in the class. Those problems, then, were categorized into S (students), T (teacher), M (material), Med (media), Meth (method), Ti (time) and F (facility).

In the English teaching learning process, the researcher discovered that the first problem is the students' attention in learning English. They are smart and active. The class was so noisy. They wanted to talk much, answer much, and do many activities. Therefore, the teacher snapped them and asked them to behave properly. Managing them to keep silent and not to talk too much is a difficult thing that the teacher has to speak louder and sometimes get angry with them. However, two or three students did not even pay attention to the teacher and the teaching learning process. It is because they wanted to do another activity.

About the English teacher, the teacher has good comprehension and ability in English. He is also good with electronic stuffs. However, from the observation, the researcher found there were still, two or three students were inactive and did not even pay attention to the teacher but the teacher did not notice or pay attention to them. On the other hand, the teacher snapped some students who were so noisy. It was difficult to manage all 37 children but the researcher believed that watching all students is better. In fact, the teacher could not manage the whole students well especially both the inactive students and the noisy students.

The other problems are connected to material and media. The teacher developed the material based on syllabus and taught to students by various media. There might be no problem in teaching material, but the researcher found the teacher did not give the students any kind of printed sheets. The teacher found the media by himself and gave various tasks to students. It is said that the teacher used various media but the researcher found he used electronic media too much and there was still another media that could be applied.

Then, the problems related to method and time. Based on what the researcher saw, the method used by teacher was communicative language teaching. However, there was no any kind of performance. The teacher instructed many activities but there was no group performance yet. Related to the time, the schedule of English class was 10.00 – 11.00 am. The students may feel tired and think of lunch break. At about 10.35 a.m., they started to be difficult in concentrating to the lesson and felt sleepy.

Another problem is related to school facility. The school has enough facilities. There is a library that students can read English books there. In the classroom, there were a television, an LCD and LCD screen, and a whiteboard. For additional facilities, there were a speaker, and a wireless microphone. However, the problem was about the size of the classroom and also the arrangement of tables and chairs in the classroom. The size of the classroom is too small for one teacher and 37 students that teacher could not move freely. Moreover, the teacher cannot change the arrangement of tables and chairs that the teacher cannot do various active activities there.

C. Limitation of the Problem

From the identification of the problem above, there were some problems categorized into S (students), T (teacher), M (material), Med (media), Meth (method), Ti (time) and F (facility). However, it was impossible to conduct an action to solve all the problems. The researcher chose the serious, urgent, and feasible problems. They are classroom management and students' characteristics, teacher attitude, need of another media, lack of given/printed handouts, and need of various performance activities for students. The detailed explanation in determining the research problems will be explained in Chapter IV.

She limited the problems that occurred into those five main problems because of some reasons. First, understanding the students' characteristics and the teacher attitude, classroom management was regarded as the main problem that has to be solved. Then, media was the problem that was feasible to solve.

Therefore, using other media and distributing given/printed handouts could be conducted by the researcher to support the main problem. Then, need of various performance activities for students was important problem to be solved here because by conducting performance activities, both the inactive students and the noisy would pay attention to the teacher. It would make them better in consecrating and learning English at the classroom. Of course, it supported the main problem, classroom management, also.

There was also the limitation in the focus of the action. This action would focus on students' listening skill improvement. It is because the improvement of children's listening skill is very important in learning a language as presented above. Integrating the four skills would be done surely but it still focused on listening skill improvement.

In this study, storytelling was conducted to improve students' listening skills in English. There were some limitations in conducting this action. First, this action would be conducted for students grade V-B SD Muhammadiyah Sagan in the academic year 2011-2012. The number of the students was just 37 students.

D. Formulation of the Problem

After determining the research problems in this research, the researcher assumes that to solve the problems above, she has to conduct actions including performance activities which are interesting and can improve their listening skills. Therefore, the formulation of the problem is, "How can the English storytelling

improve the listening skills for the Grade V-B students at SD Muhammadiyah Sagan in the academic year of 2011/2012?''.

E. Objective of the Study

The objective to this study was to solve the selected problems which is improving the listening skills for the Grade V-B students at SD Muhammadiyah Sagan in the academic year of 2011/2012 by conducting English storytelling. Hopefully, after this study, the school can apply this action research for Grade V-B with its special characteristics and the English learning and teaching tends to be successful.

F. Significances of the Research

The result of this research was expected to contribute to the following parties. First, for English teachers for children, the result can enrich their knowledge and information about improving students' listening skill through storytelling in other schools which have similar problems. Similarly, this result can enrich their knowledge and information about improving students' listening skill through storytelling in a school that has the classroom management as the main problem for the students of English Education Department. For them who are interested to study about English for children and how to manage classroom well by conducting performance activities, how to conduct storytelling and/also how to improve children's listening skill, they can use this result as the previous study before them. This significance is also for further researchers.

Then, these findings will support the development of English learning and teaching in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, especially in SD Muhammadiyah Sagan with its special characteristics. Last, for the researcher and publics, it can give the knowledge to the public about the way of solving problems happened at school.