

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Research

Language is one of the most important things to consider when communicating with others. That is because language is always used by individuals to establish communication with other individuals, both verbally and nonverbally. According to Rabiah (2012), language is also a tool to express themselves and serves as a tool to show their identity as well.

Likewise, Steven Pinker (1994) also says that, “Language is a complex, specialized skill, which develops in children spontaneously, without conscious effort or formal instruction, is deployed without awareness of its underlying logic, is qualitatively the same individuals and is distinctly more general abilities to process information or behave intelligently” (pp. 13).

It can be known that language allows humans to convey their ideas or opinions about something that happens in the surrounding environment with other people properly. Therefore, many people worldwide are starting to learn various languages, especially foreign languages. A foreign language can be defined as a language that comes from another country and enters a country whose population does not use the language in their daily lives.

In fact, Praveen M. Jain (2008) expressed the same opinion, in which he argued that, “A foreign language is a language in which a secondary environment is not observed and people from a linguistically alien society use the language “ (pp.35).

In many countries, foreign languages are the most widely studied languages, whether for education, work or just learning for a hobby. Among the several foreign languages that exist in various countries, one of the most studied foreign languages is English.

According to Jain (2008), English is an international language that has the concept of being a global language that can be used as a communication tool for anyone who wants to communicate with various people from around the world. In fact, according to him, many countries use English as a foreign language (EFL) or their second language (ESL). In Indonesia itself, English has been studied by many people so it is included as a compulsory subject in several educational institutions such as elementary schools, junior high schools, senior high schools, and universities also even made a mandatory requirement in finding a job.

Because it has a very important effect on education and future career paths, many young learners in Indonesia start learning English when they are still young from their parents. Even their parents also enroll them in English courses so that their children can master English better. Basically, these young learners study English as a foreign language called (EFL) and there are also those who study English as a second language called (ESL). However, most students in Indonesia learn English as a foreign language (EFL) because most of them rarely use English as their main language.

Although many young students in Indonesia are really interested in learning English as a foreign language (EFL), there are some students who don't like learning English so much. The reason behind it is that most of them find it difficult to understand the material given by the teacher so they only "hear" without practicing. So that makes them unable to understand the material given well and they also cannot do the assignments given well either.

According to Winastiti (2016), many children in Indonesia are not interested in learning English. The reasons behind this are the teacher, the method, the family (parents) and also the environment. However, she also said that the main reason why they (young learners) are not interested in that they often use their mother tongue

(Bahasa Indonesia) to communicate. This happens because they are used to being taught their mother tongue by their parents, so they easily understand it well. In contrast, they will find it difficult when learning English as their foreign language so, that is makes many young learners are not interested in learning English.

Outside of these reasons, English is very important for the younger generation to learn in the current era even though it is quite hard to learn. According to Mehrajuddin (2022), English plays a dominant role in almost all fields in today's globalized world. The whole world has become accessible and familiar to everyone because English is used as a common language. English not only acts as a communication tool, but it also helps us to adapt to situations.

From there it can be seen that English is very important until English is used as a learning material that has many benefits, especially for young students. According to Aslamiah (2022), English lessons are very important for students so English learning itself should be introduced to students as early as possible. Meanwhile according to Jenny (2022), learning English is an essential skill that will enable young children to reach their full potential in the future so by learning English, they can have much-needed skills when they grow up. So that when they become adults, students can keep up with the development of various international standard information.

As has been said by several writers of journal articles, English is important to learn, especially for young learners who are the next generation of the nation. However, there are still those who think this is not important. That is the main reason why this research is conducted. In this research, the researcher will discuss the importance of learning English as a foreign language for young learners. In addition, this research will focus on the parents' and teachers' perspectives on the importance of learning English as a foreign language and they will be the respondents of this research.

Through this research, it is hoped that the general public, especially parents, can know how important learning English is for their children and they can also support their children to learn English to get a bright future.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

In this study, the researcher found several problems related to the core problems that will be discussed in this study. The problem formulations include:

1. What are parents and teachers' opinions about English learning by learners at a young age?
2. How the role of parents in educating their children in learning English?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Based on the formulation of the problem, the purpose of this study is to identify the importance of learning English as a foreign language for young learners from the perspectives of parents and teachers and to understand the parents' role in educating their children in learning English.

1.4 Significance of the Study

In addition to identifying the importance of learning English as a foreign language for young learners, this research also has benefits for the researcher herself, universities, especially for students of the English Letters study program, and also parents and teachers.

First, for the researcher herself. This research allows the researcher to learn to use various theories that have been studied and also use different research methods, namely mix methods. In addition, the researcher is able to find out more about various theories and previous researchers related to the research topic, namely the importance of learning English as a foreign language for young learners. Not only that, this is also to train researchers in conducting research in the form of data collection through

questionnaires and interviews with selected respondents. So, this will be a new and challenging experience for the researcher so far.

Second, for universities. This study aims to be used as reference material for students, especially for students from the English Letters study program who have the same thesis topic as the researcher. In addition, this research can also be used as a reading for students from the English Letters study program and students from other study programs who want to see this thesis.

Third, for parents and teachers. This research is expected to help parents to understand the importance of learning English as a foreign language for young learners, especially for their children and they could participate in educating their children to learn English at home from an early age. Additionally, this research is also expected to help teachers to understand the importance of learning English as a foreign language for young learners.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

This study only contains an analysis conducted by the researcher to identify the importance of learning English as a foreign language for young learners from the perspective of parents and teachers. In this study, the researcher used a mix method research method, namely qualitative and quantitative, which for qualitative research data analysis does not involve a second rater, and for quantitative research data analysis there is no validity and reliability test.

The researcher analyzed the data that had been obtained from questionnaires and interviews using a descriptive qualitative approach for qualitative research, and also for quantitative research, the researcher calculated the percentage of answers from parents and teachers from questionnaires and interviews.

The respondents in this study were only 21 respondents consisting of 15 parents who have children who are still studying in elementary school, and 6 English teachers who are still actively teaching English for young learners in elementary school. In addition, the instrument was self-created by the researcher and also was not tested for validity and reliability. Last, the researcher conducted this research by her own without any help from other writers because of the limited of time for her to conduct and complete this thesis.

1.6 Operational Definition of Key Terms

1. Foreign language

A foreign language is a language that comes from another country where the language is not generally used in a particular country so the language is only used in the country where the language originated. However, that language will be used if someone visits a country where the language is often used. As Praveen (2008) said, a foreign language is a language in which a secondary environment is not observed and people from a linguistically alien society use the language. Besides that, foreign languages are not only English but consist of other foreign languages from other countries. For example: Mandarin, Japanese, Korean, and so on.

2. Learning English

Learning is a process or effort made by each individual to get a behavior change, both in the form of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and positive values as an experience from various materials that have been studied. According to Ane (2016), learning is something we cannot help do because it is deeply rooted in our human genes. Or it may be said that learning is something that helps us adapt to the world. English is an international language that is often used by people when he was in a country whose residents consider English as their second language or their main language.

3. Young learners

Young learners are children aged approximately between 6-12 years old, most of whom are still in elementary school. According to Phillips (1993), young learners means children from the first year of formal schooling between the ages of (five or six) to the age of eleven, or twelve. Meanwhile according to Mary & Willis (2003), young learners have two categories, the first is Young Learners (YL) which consists of young learners aged 7-12 years. The second category, Very Young Learners (VYL), consists of young learners under the age of 7. The two categories are based on the age of the young learners themselves.

4. Parents' & Teachers' Perspective

According to Hughes (2005), the word perspective used in more of an interpretative or behavioural sense include “a view or prospect”, “a particular way of regarding something”, or “an understanding of the relative importance of things”. From there, we can say that perspective is a certain way to see or understand something relatively important or even to occur. The parent's perspective generally refers to things related to their role in raising children and various things related to their children, such as the growth, development, and education of their children. From a teacher's perspective, those are issues related to teaching or learning for students, particularly young learners. (Hughes, 2005).