

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of The Study

English has become one of requisite subjects for secondary students in Indonesia. It has been chosen as one of the medium of instruction at bi/multilingual schools. Therefore, it is inferred necessary to teach English earlier before the students come to secondary. As the Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP: Educational Unit Level Curriculum), for instance, stated that the elementary graduates' competency in English is needed, because it is expected that they will be able to communicate in English, especially for the classroom interaction in order to sustain the instructional process of the secondary level (Depdiknas, 2007). Thus, the teaching of English (English Language Teaching - ELT) for elementary school students (English for Young Learners - EYL) is recommended as one of major muatan lokal (intracurricular programs).

Due to the children's overall development; social-emotional, cognitive and physical, as well as language development, the EYL requires a distinctive consideration (Linse, 2005). Hence, we must be aware to their physical and psychological needs in providing an appropriate language instruction. Barac & Bialystok (2011) proposed that the number of languages that children learn,

whether through natural exposure or educational intervention, has consequences for their development. Thus, the adjustment of the educational experiences to meet the developmental stages of the children is needed in order to provide the best possible instruction.

Teaching materials play an important role to the ELT. Chang & Goswami (2011) summarized that there are four factors promote or hinder instructional processes in EFL classes. They are: (1) teachers factor, (2) students factor, (3) administrative support, and (4) teaching resources. Moreover, Chang & Goswami proposed that, teachers should improve sufficient teaching resources such as appropriate curricula, textbooks, authentic materials, professional training, and teaching equipment in order to make ELT appropriate in the local environment. Besides, Peacock (1997) recommended that materials selected for the classroom motivate learner, so one criterion for the selection materials should be their effect on motivation.

Wedhaswary (2012) reported that there are so many irrelevant materials and burdened subjects must be learnt by the students. Grade IV learners of Sekolah Dasar Swasta (SDS: Private Elementary School) IKAL Medan, for instance, the reading materials attached in their English textbook are substantially inappropriate. They were disintegrated to listening, speaking and writing activities. Eventhough the topics have been representing daily activities, they were

not reflecting a sequential context of a single unit in a complete series, and pictures which are representing each stages of the story are excluded. In result, learners are difficult to remember the drills, whereas, the whole activity sequences of the lesson (listening, speaking, reading and writing) can build their prior knowledge. As a consequence, learners are difficult to comprehend the text and tend to be unable to activate their schemata properly because of the chronological disorder of the lesson to the whole activity sequences. In teaching these reading materials, the teacher is more involved actively (teacher-centered).

Moreover, learners' difficulties in comprehending the English Reading Materials (ERM) affected their achievement in English subject. Grade IV-D learners of SDS IKAL Medan, for instance, the average score in their Formative I administered by the teacher was still low, that is 6.1 with the Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal (KKM: Minimum Mastery Criteria) that should be achieved by them is 7.0. The teacher argued that their main obstacle is the proficiency in vocabulary. Hence, providing appropriate ERM are required in order to enhance learners' reading proficiency. Reading proficiency can be attributed to increase proficiency in vocabulary. Since, having rich vocabulary knowledge is another key element to better reading comprehension and there is a strong link between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension (Hudson, 2007 in Iwai, 2010; Matsuoka & Hirsh, 2010).

Thus, due to the necessity of the ERM development to meet with the needs of elementary learners, especially Grade IV learners of SDS IKAL Medan, this research will be conducted to develop ERM by applying Accelerated Learning Approach (ALA) principles.

### **1.2 The Problems of The Study**

Based on the background of the study, the research problems can be formulated as follow:

- (1) How are the existing ERM for Grade IV learners of SDS IKAL Medan?
- (2) What ERM are needed to meet with Grade IV learners of SDS IKAL Medan?
- (3) How are ERM developed through ALA for Grade IV learners of SDS IKAL Medan?

### **1.3 The Objectives of The Study**

To answer the research problems, the objectives of the study are to:

- (1) Evaluate the existing ERM of Grade IV learners of SDS IKAL Medan,

- (2) Obtain appropriate ERM which meet with the needs of Grade IV learners of SDS IKAL Medan,
- (3) Develop appropriate ERM through ALA principles.

#### **1.4 The Scope of the Study**

This research focus on developing appropriate ERM relevant to elementary learners, especially Grade IV learners of SDS IKAL Medan.

#### **1.5 The Significances of the Study**

Theoretically, this research is expected to produce ERM for elementary learners, particularly for Grade IV learners of SDS IKAL Medan. Additionally, it is expected to provide a good reference in developing appropriate ERM for elementary learners.

Practically, it is expected to inspire the elementary school teachers or principles to elect appropriate English textbooks for their students. Moreover, further research is required in order to exploit the best improvement.