

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Study

English is known as one of the most important language to learn since a long time ago. That is because English is used as an international language. For that reason, learning English is not a new thing for students at schools. Nowadays students already learn English since Elementary School, in some schools they even learnt it since they were at preschool and kindergarten. It is very important to teach English from an early age since the ability to learn language is decreasing as we get older. Thus, by learning from an early age students can get used to the language and do not feel awkward when using it in the future. An article titled “Why and How to Learn English at a Young Age” by Husic (2016) confirms this suggestion, “...these studies state that our ability to learn foreign languages decreases with time. It is already after puberty that our natural language learning skills start to go downhill. For that reason, it is important to start with learning foreign languages as soon as possible” (para. 3). To learn more about how children cope with learning English, starting from May 22<sup>nd</sup> to July 20<sup>th</sup> 2018,

I worked as an intern at Kumon Tirtayasa for about two months. Kumon is a place where students from any age, group, and background learn Mathematics and English. As a child I also went to Kumon to study math and I remembered that Kumon has their own way of teaching their students. Their method piqued my interest since it was kind of different from what I have been taught in my classes at the university. During my internship at Kumon I became an assistant for the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. There I learned how to be a good assistant for students to guide them to learn English in an independent way. I was given the task to assist students one on one through their Kumon routines, checked their exercises, and gave pointers when they made mistakes and helped them to correct the mistakes. I was confronted with various types of children's characters, which was fun; even though at times it was also challenging.

There were some students who acted a little bit difficult when they were asked to do their routine Kumon exercises. Here in Kumon, students are expected to learn by themselves. Kumon wanted to teach these children to be an independent learners, to read and try working on their exercises on their own before asking help from any assistant that is available at the time. Therefore, some students find it difficult since they used to have teachers teaching them step-by-step from the very beginning and reluctant to do this self-learning method. However, most of the students could be persuaded to do the practice if I gave them motivation and a solid reason of why they should do it. Nevertheless, there was a third grader whom I could not handle, his name is Eijaz. No matter how I tried to persuade him, he kept doing the opposite of what I asked him to do, for example when I asked him to read the sentence clearly, he would drawl. Or when I asked him to

concentrate on his exercise, he would talk with other student beside him.

Apparently, other senior assistants faced the same problem when dealing with him. They told me that the child is smart; that is why he easily got bored with the Kumon routines. Eijaz, like any other students, came to Kumon class every Tuesday and Friday. In class, he had to check the folder with his name on it, if there were any past homework that he need to fix. His next task was to listen and read a story related to his exercise and pause the recording after each sentence to imitate the pronunciation. After that he would work on the exercise that had been set beforehand by the assistant, the exercise would be checked for mistakes and he had to correct them after the assistant called his name. Before he went home, one assistant would ask him questions regarding the exercise he did that day. The duration for how long he did this routines depends on his mood, but the average was around one to one and a half hour. When he was bored, it would take him longer to finish, I noticed he would talk more with other students, talked with the assistant about topics unrelated to the exercise, could not sit still, with his eyes roamed around the classroom, and made a lot of mistakes in parts that he already did right on his previous class. Eijaz's case interests me since his boredom not only became a disadvantage to him, but also a disadvantage for other people around him such as the assistants and other students. As stated by Macklem in her book "Boredom in the Clasroom: Addressing Student Motivation, Self-Regulation, and Engagement in Learning" (2015), "Experiencing boredom signals the student that he or she should look for a different goal or experience. This could have negative results in a classroom should a student decide to become disruptive to increase stimulation" (pp. 21-22). Realizing the importance of

finding solution for this boredom problem; thus, I chose this case as the topic of my term paper, to find out more about what solution could be applied to help reducing boredom in this student and also the positive effect or difficulties that we might face when trying to use the method.

## B. Identification of the Problem

The problem I am going to discuss in this paper are expressed in the following questions:

1. Why did the third grade boy experience boredom in Kumon English classroom?
2. How did the student's boredom in the classroom affect me, the assistants, and other students?
3. How should the third grade boy who was bored in the Kumon English classroom be helped?

## C. Objectives and Benefits of the Study

By writing this paper, I will be able to study and identify the causes and the effects of boredom in the Kumon English classroom. Furthermore, I can find out the best potential solution to handle a third grade boy who faces boredom in the classroom.

I hope this paper can help other assistants in Kumon to realize the source of student's boredom and the potential solution that they could apply if they encounter another student with boredom. For me as the writer, doing the study make me get a lot of knowledge and information from books, journals, and

articles on the Internet. Some of them are materials that I did not get in class. In the future, if I plan to teach again, I would be prepared when facing another student with the same problem. As for readers in general, I hope this paper could give them enough information about children's boredom, in case they have the same experience with their own children.

#### D. Description of the Institution

Based on Kumon official website, Kumon is an after school learning course that was established by Toru Kumon in 1945 to help his son learn Mathematics. Nowadays, Kumon has spread to more than fifty countries and regions and it has more than four million registered students. Even though at the beginning this method was created to learn math, in 1990 Kumon personnel from Australia and Japan developed this method so they can use it to learn English.

From informal conversation with the owner I found out that the Kumon where I did my internship was at first operated in Jalan Sulanjana in 2003, before moving to Jalan Tirtayasa. Under the leadership of Ms. Lily Budiman as the owner and advisor, Kumon Tirtayasa which in 2003 only had two staff and a few students, is now always full with students from the moment they open the class until closing time. Kumon students do their routines in one big class, for English they provide materials from level 7A where students look, listen and repeat, usually for pre-school or kindergarten students, until level O for reading comprehension and interpretation. There are four assistants for Kumon English class, each one responsible for a number of students from certain level group. Every month these assistants create lesson plan for the students they are

responsible for. While at class students can ask for help from any assistant, the one who is allowed to set or change their exercise material is the assistant who was assigned to that student. The reason Ms. Lily is interested to join this Kumon franchise is because of the learning method that is different from other learning institution, where students are assisted one on one. Other positive thing that makes Kumon different is, although they demand perfect score for the exercises, they have the mission to help each student to find and realize their own potentials to learn by themselves so that they can be independent individuals in the future.

#### E. Method of the Study

I applied both library and field research to do the study. The field research was done through observation, in which I wrote the information needed in my internship journal while I was doing my internship program at Kumon Tirtayasa. I also did informal interviews with the advisor and other assistants to complete the information. As for the library research, I read some books, journals, and articles from the internet to get some valid theories to support my analysis.

#### F. Limitation of the Study

The subject of my research is one male third grader, a seven year-old boy who has boredom problem in the Kumon classroom. I limit my discussion to find the causes why the student had boredom problem in the classroom, the effects of having a student with boredom to the class and to his own academic; in addition, I try to propose the potential solutions to the problem. The study was done during my internship period which was from May 22<sup>nd</sup> to July 20<sup>th</sup> at Kumon Tirtayasa.

## G. Organization of the Term Paper

This term paper consists of four chapters. The first chapter is the Introduction, which is divided into seven parts. The first part is Background of the Study explaining the reason for choosing the topic and a brief explanation of the topic itself. The second part is Identification of the Problem, which explains the problems analyzed in the paper. The third part is Objectives and Benefits of the Study, in which part I explain the result that I want to get after I finish writing this paper and also how my paper can help the institution and the readers. The fourth part is Description of the Institution. This part presents a brief description about the institution where I worked as an intern. The fifth part is Method of the Study, explaining how I gathered the data for this paper and how I get the supporting theories for my analysis. The sixth part is Limitation of the Study, which contains the subject of my analysis to give the limitation of the topic discussed. The seventh part is Organization of the Term Paper, it has brief description about parts in this term paper. The second chapter is Problem Analysis, in this chapter I analyze and write down the causes that create the problem and effects of the problem based on the data I got from the internship program and theories from books and articles. The third chapter is Potential Solutions, which presents some proposed solutions to deal with this problem, it includes the analysis of positive and negative effects that could come from each solution. The last chapter is Conclusion, which provides the best solution to the problem with the logical reasons and some suggestions on how to apply the solution. The term paper ends with the References, containing list of sources from where the theories I use in the paper come from and Appendices.