

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the foundation and general overview of the study which consists of the background of the study, research questions, objective of the study, the significant of the study, the scope and limitation of the study, definition of the key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

In learning a language, one of the language components that should be obtained by learners is vocabulary. Stated by Richard and Renandya (2002) that vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how well learners listen, speak read, and write. Vocabulary is a central to the proficiency and gives an overview of how well students can speak, hear, read, and write. Then, Harmer in Sarosdy (2003) states that language structures make up the skeleton of a language while vocabulary is the flesh which means that both are equally important and independent. It is important for the student to get some new words from the teaching and learning process in the class. In this case, the teachers need to introduce some words using a particular strategy to the students. For the first five years or so of their lives, children are involved in the process of acquiring a meaning or oral vocabulary words that they understand when they hear them and that they can use in their speech (Piskulski, 2004:2). In the context of learning English as a foreign language, the crucial role of vocabulary is inevitable.

One of the contemporary realities that many school systems face in globalized societies around the world is that parents expect their children to take foreign language (FL) classes at an earlier age now than they did in past decades (e.g., Special Eurobarometer 243, 2006). Despite an abundance of literature supporting the effectiveness of language immersion programs (Gebauer, Zaunbauer, & Moller,

2013; Geneese & Jared, 2008; Hermanto, Moreno, & Bialystok, 2012) as a strategy to help young children learn a FL implicitly (DeKeyser, 2003; Dolean, 2015), few studies address the efficiency of formal (explicit) teaching of a foreign language during the early elementary school years. Among

the first and most important steps to be taken towards formal teaching of a FL is teaching its vocabulary (Folse, 2004; Nation, 2001). Given that this task requires learners to have solid mnemonic abilities and a rather high level of meta-cognitive abilities in order to encode the information in different ways (e.g., semantically, through phonemic associations, or through imagery), many elementary school students fail to perform as well as their older peers (for a comprehensive review, see Muñoz & Singleton, 2011). However, teachers can enhance student learning by using mnemonics when explicitly teaching vocabulary in a FL (Dolean, 2013). Two of these mnemonic strategies are the Keyword Method (KWM) and Total Physical Response (TPR). Despite the fact that there is abundant evidence supporting the use of both strategies in teaching FL vocabulary, there are no empirical studies that compare the effectiveness of the two strategies when they are used to teach new vocabulary in a FL to young learners. Our study aims to conduct such a comparative analysis through an empirical investigation.

Another popular mnemonic strategy used for teaching FL vocabulary is the Total Physical Response (TPR) developed by Asher (1997). When using this method, FL instructors give a series of commands in the target language (e.g., *jump and clap your hands*), while learners are expected to respond with whole-body movements (e.g., to jump while clapping their hands). TPR is supported by several theoretical approaches to learning situations. Given that children registered in early elementary school are not developmentally prepared to focus and sustain attention for long periods of time while staying still in their seats (Matusz et al., 2015), and that learning at this age is usually more kinesthetically-oriented (Vetter, O'Connor, O'Dwyer, & Orr, 2015) using TPR to teach FL vocabulary seems to be an age-appropriate and efficient method for elementary school FL classrooms.

Vocabulary is one of the language skill elements has an important role for English learner in learning a foreign language. Teachers teach the student how to use vocabulary to convey their ideas, feeling, and knowledge. Vocabulary has a central role in language teaching and learning. With references to how important to mastering vocabulary is, teaching learning vocabulary has special meaning in every level especially the basic one. In this level, children should master as many words as they are. Teaching English, especially introducing vocabulary for young learners maybe different than for adults. How to make the children interest and excited in learning process. Children have a special characteristic and needs, so teaching English for young learners more challenging than teach the adults for English teacher. There are several method that used by the teacher or instructor to improving student's English skill. Total Physical Response (TPR), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and Grammar Translation Method (GTM) are some examples of so many methods that used in teaching and learning English.

The fact, the learners of fourth grade of SD Muhammadiyah 1 GKB do not master yet the four language components. However, students sometimes get difficulties to use or apply the vocabulary. Their difficulties in using vocabulary have been studied can be caused by some reasons. One of the reasons could be in the method which is used by the teacher in presenting the lesson in the classroom. Therefore, the appropriate method in presenting the lesson in the classroom have to be considered. When the writer observed to improve the students' vocabularies, the English teacher orders the students to write some new words in a note and then memorize what they have already studied. But the students felt depressed with a lot of vocabulary item assigned to be memorized. This method would make students get bored and forget the new vocabulary easily. They need something fun and easy to access the vocabulary quickly when it is required for use. According to H. Douglas Brown "teaching can be defined as showing or helping someone to learn how to do something, giving instructions, guiding in the study of something, providing with knowledge, causing to know or understand". For this case, using variety method, for

the example TPR method in teaching made the subject matter should be more interesting and teaching learning process run effectively and efficient, therefore the purpose of teaching can be achieved.

Moreover, to make English teaching effective and efficient is still difficult. This difficulty depends on previous technique used by English teacher. The technique of teaching vocabulary like substitution drill and memorizing words seem to make the student bored, even it is killing the students interest. From the description mentioned above, it is important for teacher who concerns about teaching English, especially vocabulary, to implement a certain technique which can encourage the student motivation and interest in vocabulary mastery through learning process. Based on the cases described above, the writer intended using Total Physical Response (TPR) method which was conducted of the students of fourth grade at SD Muhammadiyah 1 GKB in learning vocabulary. With TPR method, the students can learn vocabulary easier and they can gain their motivation in learning English, because the students practice directly using the vocabulary of the target language in real context. By doing so, the students can develop the storage of the vocabulary in a short time. Besides, that TPR method also helps the learners to broaden their linguistic input because they use body movement to attract their attention in teaching learning process.

Based on the reasons stated above, the writer takes a title of this “thesis” “*The Use of Total Physical Response Method in Teaching English Vocabulary to Young Learners*”. The writer hopes that the method can improve students’ vocabularies and gives meaningfulness for learners of any kinds of classroom events.

1.2 Research Problem

As already been explained above that the achievement of students in vocabulary was quite low and it influences their score and also their confidence in using English for communication, the teaching-learning process must be rich by using TPR technique as a solution to solve the weaknesses of the students in English. So, the

problem that is going to be discussed in this study can be formulated as follows:

1. How is the use of Total Physical Response in teaching english vocabulary for young learners?
2. What are the students' response towards the use TPR method in learning vocabulary?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Based on the statement above, the researcher has some objective of the study would be as follows :

1. To describe how the use of TPR method in teaching and learning vocabulary to young learners.
2. To describe the students respons towards the use of Total Physical Response method in process of teaching and learning vocabulary. In addition, the hope of this study is that TPR can be a better way in teaching English.

1.4 Significance of the Study

By doing this research, the researcher hopes that the research will give practical and theoretical benefits

1. Theoretical benefits

The finding of this study gives discourse and knowledge for teachers about how English class method to be interesting by using TPR that is so students interested.

2. Practical benefits

The other for this research will get a good result related to teaching vocabulary. It is expected that this study can arouse their motivation and interest in the learning material so that the learning process become more enjoy and much better.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

In order to make this study more specific, the researcher determines the scope and limitation. However this study focuses on teaching vocabulary, in particular to teach imperative verb or command and action verb that gesture because the students are young learners. This research focused on the implementation of Total Physical Response (TPR) method in teaching vocabulary in fourth grade of Elementary School student. Moreover this research observed the students' response and the benefit for the teachers and students toward Total Physical Response.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

The definition are intended to avoid the ambiguity in understanding some terms used in this study, the researcher thinks it is necessary to define some key word as follows:

1. *Vocabulary* is a component of language that contains all of information about meaning using words in language. It usually consists of simple words like: persons, animal, or things in the classroom.
2. *Total Physical Response Method* is a language teaching method built around the coordination of speech and action, and it attempt to teach language through physical (motor) activity (Richard, 2001:73)
3. *Young Learner*. There are many statements about meaning of Young Learners. According to Purwaningsih, "Young Learners are learners in Elementary School aging 9-10 years old who are learning English as foreign language". Based on that statement, we can know that Young Learners are students of primary school.