

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

As the basic of learning particular language, learning vocabulary is quite important. While in fact, English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners, especially Indonesian students have found difficulties in mastering this basic unit that becomes a requirement when the EFL learners study for a new foreign language.

The role of mastering vocabulary entries, moreover in elementary school, is the most point towards having easier way to learn other skills in English. In an elementary school local curriculum, it is said

“At the end of the primary level, students are supposed to have listening, speaking, reading and writing in English in a simple manner based on their interests and development of level with vocabulary mastery more or less than 500 words” (Depdikbud, 2001)”.

Teaching vocabulary, so far has a main shot as the most basic unit which is taught in an elementary level. During the lesson in the subject of this study at the first semester, the researcher finds some indicators that show the low competences of vocabulary achievement. In this case, some tests during the first semester are taken as the sample of achievement test.

.The researcher who is also as the teacher of the class finds there are many students who still have less competences in vocabulary achievement such as in a question-answer for pre-lesson activity or even use them in some review cases. This is proved by lot of students who like to be quite rather than doing fault on his/her answers. They seem so difficult to respond

the acceptable answer. Another case is, they have difficulties in matching words to several short-answer questions, arranging words in a good sentence or completing puzzle based on given clues. They have problem in recalling those vocabularies at certain materials. Most of students dominate faults in giving meaning or producing vocabulary at particular skill such as reading comprehension, drilling on simple conversation or even in a short question-answer. In short, those still become big problems.

In this research, the researcher efforts to let an alternative technique called thematic-unit approach brought to the students learning which is supposed capable to optimize the students' vocabulary achievement. According to Mora, thematic-unit approach is defined as a framework that accommodates the needs and abilities of students with various levels of language proficiency. Dealing with teaching through thematic-unit, there are several advantages in which thematic-unit planning is employed at particular English classroom; the concepts are interrelated, vocabulary is repeated and reinforce, information is connected in a meaningful way, and the material is adjusted for language level. In addition, the entire units of material can be compressed to shorten the time during the semester program (Mora, 2006).

Regarding to the theory, this approach has been applied on the first and the second grade of elementary level. The integration among unit themes gathered with identification of supporting materials in four skills of teaching action brings about the easier way for students to learn vocabulary. This approach tries to cover units, language skills and language focuses

under one theme. They are in harmony compressed and students are supposed to know and recall more than what they are learning about during the lesson then try to concept through word web or word classification. Thus, to find out students' achievement as well as to investigate the result before and after the treatment (thematic units approach), the researcher decides to apply an action research.

In brief, this thematic-unit approach is going to be applied on the fourth grade of SDN Sidokumpul IV Gresik to have a better learning and vocabulary achievement.

1.2 Problem Statement

As the illustrations above, the common problem of being an English teacher on vocabulary teaching in classroom is how to avail the attractive method and materials. Consequently, teacher is supposed to compose the interesting material and lesson plan to teach with some approaches.

To answer the problem above, the researcher intends to formulate the problem statement; how can thematic-units approach optimize students' vocabulary achievement at the fourth grade of SDN Sidokumpul IV Gresik?.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study aims to find an answer of the problem above through implementing meaningful classroom activity with a method called thematic unit approach in which the purpose is employed to optimize students' vocabulary achievement. Hence, at the end of this study, this sort of

approach is considered to lead a good result of students' vocabulary achievement in term of using the entries of vocabulary which applied as the basic competence on the four English skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing).

1.4 Significance of the Study

The result of this research project is supposed to improve students' vocabulary achievements. Thus, it is expected to contribute a better progress to students. To the teacher, this study becomes a consideration to compose English lesson attractively based on unity of divergent material indicators and students' needs. Above all, the significance changes within these actions are gratefully hoped to answer the problems happen in the subject of the study and to gain a better result of study in general use by giving some knowledge and information to the researcher and the readers to possibly establish the next useful research project.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

In order to make this study more specific, the researcher determines the scope and limitation in which is focused on teaching approach through thematic-unit and going to be held on the local elementary school subject at the fourth grade of SDN Sidokumpul IV Gresik.

However, the main point will be stressed on improving vocabulary teaching both in perspective and productive English skills and the requirement of technique, the researcher determines a communicative drill to reinforce more this sort of approach.

1.6 Definition of Key Term

In order to ease the comprehension of this study, some key terms are required to define as follows;

Approach is defined as a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language and the nature of language learning and teaching. Meanwhile, method means the plan of language teaching which is consistent with the theories. Technique means all activities taken place in a language class, an implementation phase or procedure while approach and method are as the level of design (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

Thematic-unit approach refers to an accommodation of needs and abilities of students by using selected materials in a unity of theme. This aims to combine some useful unit materials and some language focuses under particular theme toward better achievement at certain skill (Mora, 2006).

A communicative drill means a drilling technique in which the type of response is controlled but the student provides his or her own content or information (Richard, Platt, and Platt, 1992). In communicative drills a teacher controls the learners' speech primarily by ensuring that they produce short utterances.

CHAPTER II