

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Parents nowadays like their children learning a foreign language such as English. For this aim, they send their children to an English course to learn it. They even start it at the early age of their children. Rubin and Thompson (1994: 4) support this idea by saying, “Some people think that the best time to begin studying a foreign language is in childhood and that the younger you are, the easier it is to learn another language.”

English is becoming an important language now but children as young learners usually find some difficulties in acquiring it. For young learners learning a foreign language is frustrating, embarrassing, and maddeningly difficult since they think that they are incapable to learn it ([http://www.tprsource.com/Austin Damiani, 2003](http://www.tprsource.com/AustinDamiani,2003)).

In learning a foreign language, young learners have to learn it piece by piece. Wilkinson (1982: 117) as quoted by Puspawati (1997: 1) states, “People begin to learn the language from one word, phrase, clause and sentence. They learn step by step until they know what the language is about and how to use it.” In this case, young learners have to learn the basic element of the foreign language that is the vocabulary since their vocabulary mastery will determine how they express their thoughts and ideas through writing and speaking and also their ability to understand what they read or hear.

On the other hand, teaching English for young learners is a rewarding and enjoyable experience for the teacher as stated by Kimble and Garnezy (in H. Douglas Brown's book 1987: 6), "Teaching is showing or helping someone to learn how to do something, giving instructions, guiding the study of something, providing with knowledge, causing to know or understand." Brown (1987: 7) supports this idea by saying, "Teaching cannot be defined apart from learning. Teaching is guiding and facilitating learning, enabling the learners to learn, setting the conditions for learning." He continues to say that the teacher's understanding of how the learners learn will determine her teaching style, approach, methods and classroom techniques." However, learners usually do not have freedom to express themselves in learning as the teacher unconsciously being the only learning source. The teacher leads even chooses the way of learners' learning from beginning until the end of learning activities. In the Translation Method, learners are asked to follow the teacher's instructions. Translation Method is a method in which learners have to translate each language into another (Freeman, 1986:9). However, Krashen (1983) in Mukarto (1989: 67) states,

Teaching like instruction is a process. In the process all components are activated to carry out their own tasks. The teacher's task in teaching is to create an environment or situation in which the students can learn. Research and studies have proved that learners learn best when motivation is high and effective filter, which "screens" all the language, is low. The effective filter is low when students enjoy learning, when they are not tense. Indeed, it is not easy to create such a situation.

On the other hand, teaching young learners sometimes is also frustrating for the teachers as young learners' attention spans are very short. Young learners usually get bored easily if the procedures of teaching used by the teachers are the same from time to time such as the teacher always uses Translation Method, a

method in which the students translate each language into the other (Freeman, 1986: 9) over time to time. Freeman (1986: 115) says, “Language learning is more effective when it is fun.” Kline in Dryden and Vos (1999: 9) also supports this idea by saying, “Learning is most effective when it is fun.” Hernowo in Dryden and Vos (1999: 10) as quoted by Santi (2004) adds further by saying, “Fun condition would push someone to try seriously, get involved, and get passionate in doing something – including in learning.” Therefore, choosing applicable method will help teachers a lot while they are teaching so they can minimize problems that happened in the class while the activities are interesting and fun for the young learners to learn English.

However, teachers do not have to be distressed anymore in teaching young learners since every one is an expert; we have all mastered at least one language already. This cheerful and optimistic perspective inspired James J. Asher (1988) to create a unique stress-free method that is well known as the Total Physical Response (TPR). Total Physical Response is the solution for those who have struggled with learning languages and thinking that they simply cannot do it.

In the Total Physical Response, young learners learn the language through hearing, seeing and doing it. So, learners are really involved in the activity. Researchers in Dryden and Vos (1999: 26) say, “In learning something, you have to practice it.” Further, they add that we learn through what we see, what we hear, what we do. They also support this by saying, “We learn 90% from what we say and do.” It means that the complex information can be absorbed and remembered easily if the students really get involved. Moreover, in Dryden and Vos (1999:

129-130) stated that people learn better when they get involved, move experience and try. Therefore, this study is conducted to help young learners easier learning foreign language especially English through the procedures that the English teachers use in the class that is Total Physical Response Method.

The activities in Total Physical Response are very simple; students just listen to the teacher and later, respond to the spoken utterances. In the Total Physical Response activities, the students are expected to imitate the teacher's commands using gestures, movement, and facial expressions. Celce-Murcia (1984: 2) states, "In human communication, giving and receiving information can be conveyed non-verbally via gestures, body language or proxemics."

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The background of the study discussed above leads to this question "Do first grade students who are taught vocabulary using Total Physical Response Method have a significantly higher vocabulary achievement than those who are taught using Translation Method?"

1.3 Objective of the Study

In line with the statement of the problem above, the objective of this study is to find out whether Total Physical Response Method can give a significant effect on vocabulary achievement of the first grade students.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the method used that is the Total Physical Response for helping young learners especially first grade students of Sekolah Citra Berkati to learn foreign language especially vocabulary. The vocabulary is limited to noun, action verbs, and adjective. The writer will treat the first grade students of Sekolah Citra Berkati using Total Physical Response to make learning process more enjoyable, interesting and easier. As noted by Asher in <http://www.tpr-world.com/>, “Children in learning their first language, appear to do a lot of listening before they speak, and their listening is accompanied by physical responses (reaching, grabbing, moving, looking, and so forth).” In the Total Physical Response method, the first grade students of Sekolah Citra Berkati are expected to respond the given commands.

1.5 The Hypothesis

There is one hypothesis in this paper. That is alternative hypothesis. It is said that there is a significant difference on the vocabulary achievement of the first grade students who are taught using Total Physical Response Method and those who are taught using Translation Method.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The writer hopes that the result of this study can give some contributions for teachers of young learners to teach English vocabulary in a more interesting way by using the Total Physical Response Method. By using Total Physical Response in the class, the writer hopes that the students are more motivated to learn foreign language especially English.

1.7 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study is only limited to the first grade elementary students. In order to achieve the objective of the study, the writer focuses on the English vocabulary such as noun, action verbs and adjectives. In this study, the writer only concentrates on the applied method of teaching vocabulary to the first grade level.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

Before the writer goes on to the next chapter, it is important to give the definition of the key terms in order to avoid misunderstanding. The key terms are:

1. Effect is the result of change caused by somebody or something. (Oxford, 1995: 369)
2. Total Physical Response (Boggles Word Glossary) is a method which was developed by James J. Asher in which a learner responds to the language he hears with physical actions.
3. Method is the practical realization of an approach which includes various procedures and techniques as a part of its standard fare. (Harmer, 2003: 78)

4. Vocabulary means total number of words in a language. (Oxford, 1995: 1331)

1.9 Assumptions

The assumptions of the study were:

1. The two groups of students were the same age and academic competence statistically.
2. The condition of the room and situation of the classroom used for the experiment were the same.
3. The vocabulary materials had been well selected to suit both groups.

1.10 Organization of the Study

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter I is the introduction, discussing about the background of the study, the statement of the problem, objective of the study, theoretical framework, the hypotheses, significance of the study, scope and limitations of the study, the definition of key terms, assumptions, and the organization of this study. Chapter II deals with the review of the related literature. In chapter III, the writer discusses the research methodology. Chapter IV discusses the findings and interpretations. Chapter V deals with the conclusion.