

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher focuses on the reasons why this research is done. It provides the background of the problem, the statement of the problem, the objective of the study, significance of the study, assumption, limitation and scope. It also presents clarification of key terms, and organization of the study.

1.1 Background of the Problem

The role of English in Indonesia is as an international language that Indonesian people use to communicate with people in the outside world. In this era of globalisation the ability of speaking English is important and is becoming more important every day.

In the context of teaching English as a Second Language or Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) the teaching of speaking skills began to play a bigger role. More serious attention for teaching of speaking skills is important due to the large number of students who want to study English mainly for communicative purposes. According to Richards and Renandya (2002), “A large percentage of the world’s language learners study English in order to develop proficiency in speaking” (p. 201). As Celce-Murcia’s (1991) study concluded:

Today, language students are considered successful if they can communicate effectively in their second or foreign language, whereas two decades ago the accuracy of the language produced would most likely be the major criterion contributing to the judgments of a student’s success or lack of success (p. 125).

Proficiency means being able to use the language freely in a general context. As Richards and Rodgers (2001) stated, “Oral proficiency is equated with accurate pronunciation and grammar and the ability to respond quickly and accurately in speech situations” (p. 58). For many years academic writers thought of foreign language proficiency as being able to use a language correctly, making no mistakes in grammar and structure.

When communicative teaching came up in the 1970’s the attention moved to communication, the ability to speak and understand. An important goal in teaching English is developing the student’s oral fluency. What a teacher wants is to see that the students can speak and interact freely using the target language. Interaction here means that the students can practice English by responding to what their teachers and other students say. But there are many obstacles to overcome in trying to reach that goal. Even more so in Asia. Many western teachers observe that Asian students are passive, quiet and shy compared to students from different cultures. The researcher has observed during her years as an English teacher and her teaching practice in an elementary school in Surabaya that this passiveness and shyness is indeed an additional challenge but that it can be overcome if the student’s self-confidence can be strengthened. According to Gebhard (2000), “Problems that some EFL/ESL teachers face include the following: the students will not talk problems, some students are so shy or have such high level of anxiety over speaking that they will not speak in class” (p. 186-187).

In practice the teacher often feeds them with the knowledge but does not trigger them to think and to actively speak up what they have in their mind. Some students understand what the teacher says. However, they do not know how to reply it back because of lack of vocabulary and lack of practice that makes them lose confidence. Moreover, other students in the classroom will laugh or make fun of the mistakes of the student's pronunciation, intonation etc. Because of this most students do not use the 'speaking lesson' moment maximally. They will only speak if the teacher asks them and will answer with just one or two words. Students do not get praised for their speaking performance in the classroom. So it is easier and safer for them to keep quiet. Knowles (1983) found "the fact is that oral work in schools has never been regarded as being as important as written work" (p. 177). Then it can easily happen that since the students do not give a good response to the teacher, the teacher-talking time (TTT) is taking control. It causes students to be passive listeners with no improvement in their speaking skills and no desire to get involved. Celce-Murcia (1991) found "the teacher-dominated classroom (teacher-fronted) is characterized by the teacher's speaking most of the time, leading activities, and constantly passing judgment on student performance, ..." (p. 57).

The researcher thinks of maximizing the Students Talking Time (STT) and how to give students more time to speak and how to make them speak up. Many hurdles must be overcome, the most important one is the fact that current practice allows the students to be non-participative with regard to speaking. Lewis (1996) stated, "for the most part, Indonesian students are silent, occasionally

completing pronunciation drills or answering comprehension questions on the readings or grammar exercises” (p. 29).

In the current practice a lot of teaching time is used for copying text from the blackboard into the student’s workbooks and by translating English texts into Indonesian. The textbooks and the curriculum as dictated by the Ministry of Education support a semi communicative methodology with emphasis on speaking abilities. Nevertheless, during my teaching practice at an elementary school Surabaya, I noticed that some teachers still favour the traditional model of grammar-translation and direct method. Those methods are still persistently being used in the teaching process. Fellow students who were doing the teaching practice at other schools had the same experience. It seems that traditional methods still dominate the learning system in Indonesia. In teaching English as a foreign language, it has not been compulsory for students to speak English with the teacher and with the other students in the classroom. The usage of the students’ mother tongue, Indonesian, is still very common and accepted by the teachers. The researcher believes that this does not help at all to make the students reach their goals to become fluent in the foreign language.

Harlow and Muyskens (1994) explained, “Many language students consider speaking ability one of their primary goals of study, either they would derive some personal satisfaction from being able to speak a second language or because they felt it would be useful in travel or in pursuing other interests or career goals” (as cited in Hadley A. O, 2001, p. 230). If teachers want to help their students to reach these goals of oral proficiency they must find ways to encourage

the students to participate in the learning process and make them feel comfortable in practising the use of English in a natural and fun way. In doing that, using the elicitation technique might help students to activate their communicative competence and use the English language to express their feelings and ideas. As a result, classroom interaction could run more effectively and efficiently.

This way of teaching requires teachers to be well prepared in presenting the lesson through supported activities or techniques including various eliciting techniques to stimulate students' talk in the classroom. Having worked for several English language training institutes in Surabaya, the researcher has experienced that elicitation techniques can achieve good and quick results in improving the students' self-confidence and speaking abilities.

For these reasons, the researcher is interested in investigating the effect of using the elicitation techniques to grade-5 students in an elementary school. The purpose is to find out whether these techniques can also be effectively used in a large classroom with 35 students or more.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In doing the research, the researcher examines the effect of eliciting technique by using pictures. In this study, the researcher is trying to answer the following research questions:

1.2.1 Major Problem:

Do the 5th grade students who are taught using Elicitation techniques show more improvement in English speaking ability than those who are taught using Drilling techniques?

1.2.2 The Sub-Research Questions

Since the speaking achievement will be evaluated on 4 aspects (pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and fluency) as suggested by David P. Harris (1969, p 87), the researcher wants to find out if the difference in improvement applies equally to all four aspects. This result leads to the following minor research questions:

1.2.2.1 Do the 5th grade students who are taught using Elicitation techniques show more improvement in pronunciation than those who are taught using Drilling techniques?

1.2.2.2 Do the 5th grade students who are taught using Elicitation techniques show more improvement in grammar than those who are taught using Drilling techniques?

1.2.2.3 Do the 5th grade students who are taught using Elicitation techniques show more improvement in vocabulary than those who are taught using Drilling techniques?

1.2.2.4 Do the 5th grade students who are taught using Elicitation techniques show more improvement in fluency than those who are taught using Drilling techniques?

1.3 Major Objective of the Study

This study is intended to find out whether Elicitation techniques can help students to improve their English speaking abilities more than when using Drilling techniques.

1.3.1 Sub Objective of the Study

1.3.1.1 This study is intended to find out whether Elicitation techniques can help students to improve their pronunciation more than when using Drilling techniques.

1.3.1.2 This study is intended to find out whether Elicitation techniques can help students to improve their grammar more than when using Drilling techniques.

1.3.1.3 This study is intended to find out whether Elicitation techniques can help students to improve their vocabulary more than when using Drilling techniques.

1.3.1.4 This study is intended to find out whether Elicitation techniques can help students to improve their fluency more than when using Drilling techniques.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

Theories on how language is learned can be divided in two main streams in psychology: Behaviourism and Cognitivism. According to the theory of behaviourism (Brown, 1994; Gass & Selinker, 1994; Skinner, 1957) stated, “Behavioral learning theory views learning as a response to stimuli in the

environment; the learner is a “creature of habit” who can be manipulated, observed, and described” (as cited in Lavadenz. 2010: 19). Behaviourist theory explains learning as a result of imitation, practice, reinforcement and habit formation. Lightbown and Spada stated that Behaviourism had a powerful influence on foreign language teaching in North America between the 1940s and the 1970s. Nelson Brooks (1960) and Robert Lado (1964) were two proponents of Behaviourism. They influenced the development of audio-lingual teaching materials and teacher training in general. In their view classroom activities should focus on mimicry and memorization and on endless repetitions of learned dialogues and sentence patterns.

Behaviourism studies behaviour to identify its determinants. The theories of drilling are related to the behaviourism theory of learning because both of the drilling and behaviourism believe that learning can be acquired through habitual activities. They refer to language as verbal behaviour, which is language that includes gestures and body movements as well as spoken word (Pierce & Eplin. 1999). According to Hadley (2001), “For the behaviourist, practice is essential because learners need to form new habits (stimulus-response associations) in the second language; this is achieved through massive repetition so that “over learning” of the new material will occur.

Cognitivism came as a reaction to Behaviourism. It studies the mental processes of learning through scientific methods and abstractions from behaviour. According to Bruner (1996) & Piaget (1974) (as cited in Magalylavadenz. 2010: 19), “Cognitive theories say that learning can be explained as deep, complex

psychological phenomena such as motivation, schemas, and processes for learning”. Teaching occurs in phases with gradual complexity. Cognitivism sees behaviour as the result of mental processes Cognitive theories look at the way the mind works; how it perceives, stores, organizes, and retrieves information. According to Segalowitz. 2003. (as cited in Lightbown & Spada. 2006. p. 39), “learners have to pay attention at first to any aspect of the language that they are trying to understand or produce. ‘Pay attention’ in this context is accepted to mean using cognitive resources to process information”. However there is a limit to how much information a learner can pay attention to. Thus, learners at the earlier stages will use most of their resources to understand the main words in a message. Gradually, through experience and practice, information that was new becomes easier to process, and learners become able to access it quickly and even automatically.

Behaviourists believe in techniques that produce a lot of outside influences (inputs) for the learner. Drilling techniques are a good example of these techniques. Cognitivists prefer techniques that make better use of the creative abilities of the human brain. One of those techniques is the elicitation technique. Both techniques are described in Chapter 2.

1.5 Hypothesis

Since this is a quasi experimental research, a zero hypothesis and an alternative hypothesis have been formulated.

1.5.1 Alternative Hypothesis (Ha)

There is a significant difference between the speaking achievement of grade-5 students who have been taught using Elicitation techniques and those taught using Drilling techniques.

1.5.2 Null-Hypothesis (Ho)

There is no significant difference between the speaking achievement of grade-5 students who have been taught using Elicitation techniques and those taught using Drilling techniques.

1.5.3 Additional Alternative Hypotheses the Sub-Research Question (aHa)

1.5.3.1 The 5th grade students who are taught using Elicitation techniques show more improvement in pronunciation than the students in the control group.

1.5.3.2 The 5th grade students who are taught using Elicitation techniques show more improvement in grammar than the students in the control group.

1.5.3.3 The 5th grade students who are taught using Elicitation techniques show more improvement in vocabulary than the students in the control group.

1.5.3.4 The 5th grade students who are taught using Elicitation techniques show more improvement in fluency than the students in the control group.

1.5.4 Additional Null-Hypothesis the Sub-Research Question (aH0)

1.5.4.1 The 5th grade students who are taught using Elicitation techniques do not show more improvement in pronunciation than the students in the control group.

1.5.4.2 The 5th grade students who are taught using Elicitation techniques do not show more improvement in grammar than the students in the control group.

1.5.4.3 The 5th grade students who are taught using Elicitation techniques do not show more improvement in vocabulary than the students in the control group.

1.5.4.4 The 5th grade students who are taught using Elicitation techniques do not show more improvement in fluency than the students in the control group.

1.6 The Significance of the Study

The significance of this study will be determined by the number of teachers or researchers who will be triggered by this research to carry out similar studies. Studies that investigate further in how effective using elicitation techniques can be, how speaking abilities can be measured and how important it is to focus on an early stage of language learning on speaking instead of just learning reading, writing, and listening.

As this study describes how Eliciting techniques were applied particularly in stimulating students' talk in the classroom, the findings of the study are expected to contribute theoretically and practically to the improvement of the teaching and learning process. In addition, the findings can give teachers some valuable inputs and references to develop their teaching performances in the

classroom. Moreover, the result of the study can provide valuable information and serve as documents for English teachers especially for the teachers at the school where the experiment was carried out. It is expected that the students who can participate more actively, will be less anxious to speak English, and will be brave in answering teachers' questions, as well as in communicating in English. The researcher hopes that one day, based on the findings of this study, Elicitation will become more common in Indonesian public schools and that speaking abilities of Indonesian elementary school students will improve substantially.

If the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is correct and elicitation would be used at elementary school level, Indonesian students would be more fluent in English.

1.7 Assumption

The researcher assumes that the treatments of both groups were equal, neutral and comparable. The researcher is qualified as an English language teacher and has ample experience with elicitation and drilling techniques from previous employment as a language teacher.

The treatment in the experimental group and control group was done based on the procedures of the school and in accordance with the lesson plan. The researcher also assumes that the test was done in a neutral and professional way by using a script, following procedure and being carried out by qualified language teachers. The same applies to the evaluators and the evaluation process.

1.8. Scope and Limitation

The research target is the students in the 5th grade of an elementary school in Surabaya. This group has been chosen as they have learned English long enough from the first grade. Students in the 6th grade might want to concentrate too much on the national exam. The Elicitation techniques and Drilling techniques in describing pictures is employed by the teacher in stimulating students' talk in the elementary school.

Within the framework of teaching practice there was only limited time to expose the students to elicitation and therefore the effect of using elicitation could only be limited. Another limitation in this research is that it is focused on teaching speaking and that it measures only in the improvement in speaking abilities.

Teaching of speaking usually covers 5 elements (pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension). However, This study is limited to the teaching speaking which covers 4 elements includes pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and fluency. The researcher did not include comprehension because in accordance with the curriculum and the syllabus, speaking in fifth grade is not focusing on comprehension.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid unnecessary misunderstanding and ambiguity, some terms used in the study are clarified and defined as follows:

Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information (Brown, 1994; Burns &

Joyce, 1997). Teaching speaking in this study refers to David P. Harris rating scale (1969) that includes 5 elements (pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension).

Elicitation Technique is a teaching technique in which the student is invited/encouraged/ requested to produce words and sentences by using pictures, flashcards and miming.

Drilling Technique: According to Haycraft (1978) (as cited in Tefl WordPress. 2010), “it was a key feature of audio-language method approaches to language teaching, which placed emphasis on repeating structural patterns through oral practice” (p. 36).

Fifth Grade Students are students who are between the ages of 11-12 years old who are studying in elementary schools.

1.10 Organization of the Study

The research study is divided into five chapters. Each chapter is subdivided into subtopics that elaborate on the given issue. The chapters are arranged as follows:

Chapter I is introduction. The thesis begins by telling the background why the researcher is interested in writing the thesis with the theme eliciting in teaching and learning speaking. It includes the background of the study, the scope of the study, the objectives of the study, the significance of the study, its participants, definition of key terms, and organization of the research paper.

Chapter II provides theoretical foundations of the study which are relevant in conducting the research. The theoretical views include the nature of techniques and some techniques used by the teachers in stimulating students' talk. The organization of the study and references to relevant literature of teaching English, more modern ways of teaching, elicitation and about testing methods for speaking abilities are provided.

Chapter III focuses on research methodology where the research questions and the research method are defined. Special attention is given to the system of data collection and the assessment system. It includes research design, site and participants, research procedure, instruments, and data analysis.

Chapter IV describes the findings from the research including the graphical presentations of these findings

Chapter V provides conclusions, reservations and recommendations based on the findings of this study.