CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Since English has become an international language, more and more people learn English. In Indonesia, for example, English is taught even before the children enter the playgroup. This is supported by the fact that many children learn a foreign language when they are still in a very young age. This phenomenon has made Teaching English to Young Learners, TEYL, become increasing famous. Since English is important nowadays, in every school, English is taught as one of the main subjects. In schools, teachers do not only teach the language skills but also the English components such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. However, many teachers still give less attention on the students' vocabulary achievement. They are still using the traditional technique in teaching vocabulary. Consequently, many students have got difficulties to improve their language skills because they lack of vocabulary. Therefore, the need of giving more attention to the vocabulary development of the students by using different techniques to teach vocabulary is getting higher and higher.

Vocabulary is still the Cinderella of language teaching. Although vocabulary is as one of the most important aspects of language developments, it is still the neglected area. Carter and Mc. Carthy (1988) state that vocabulary is the heart of language teaching and learning. People will not be able to listen, speak, read and write if they do not have sufficient vocabulary. However, the focus of attention is almost exclusively on grammar and pronunciation. Many course books have given 'structures', yet they have given little guidance other than word lists (Taylor, 1992). Furthermore, many teachers do not give much attention to their students' vocabulary mastery because teaching vocabulary has been included in teaching reading. Teachers tend to give attention more to teach the students' reading skill than to teach their vocabulary. Besides that, since they do not have time to teach vocabulary by using various techniques, many of them prefer to use an old way of teaching vocabulary which is by translating and then memorizing

the words. Consequently, many students have got difficulties in improving their language skills because they lack of vocabulary.

Besides the limited number of vocabulary items that the students acquire, the traditional technique of teaching vocabulary such as translation also affects students' interest in learning English. In this technique, teachers introduce new vocabulary by translating the vocabulary items of the target language to the students' native language (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Then, the students are asked to memorize the words. This technique is helpful in comprehending texts in the target language because students know the meaning of the words. However, the vocabulary the students have learned will only stay in their short term memory because they only read and translate the new word without having a chance to experience it (Stevick, 1982). As a result, they will forget the words easily. In other words, students who are given opportunities to make associations with new words and to form types of mental images such as acting them out are more effective than only memorization. Therefore, implementing a technique which gives students more opportunities to experience the target language is important.

One of the teaching techniques which let students make association with the target language they learn is Total Physical Response-Story Telling (TPR-S). TPR-S is one of major types of TPR activities besides Total Physical Response Body (TPR-B), Total Physical Response Object (TPR-O), and Total Physical Response Picture (TPR-P). However, from the four major types of TPR activities, TPR-S is the most interesting and enjoyable. In this technique, first of all, new vocabulary items are introduced by using Total Physical Response (TPR). Then, a story featuring the words is read by the teacher while his students are acting the words out. New vocabulary can be introduced and easily comprehended within a story's context because learners usually learn new skills when they are interested in the topic or when it is useful to them. Moreover, storytelling is also a way to emphasize the uniqueness of each person's imagination, and imagination can generate language. Furthermore, because teachers will contextualize the acquired vocabulary and act it out, their students will be able to hear, see, act out, retell, revise and rewrite it (Marsh, 2000). Since it will also give students something to think in the target language and the students will also have more opportunities to

experience the acquired vocabulary, it will stay longer in their memory (Stevick, 1982). He also states that experience is the food that the brain needs. In other words, the more chances the students get to experience learning the target language the faster they will learn the language. In addition, because TPR-S provides more relaxed situation and fun, students will be able to acquire the vocabulary more successfully. Jensen (1998) puts it even more forcefully: "Emotions drive attention, create meaning, and have their own memory pathways". In other words, creating a warm emotional climate in which children feel self-confident, free, and highly motivated is equally as important as providing activities that have emotional connections.

Thus, based on the discussion above, the writer conducted a study on the effectiveness of Total Physical Response-Story Telling to teach vocabulary to improve students' vocabulary achievement.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Do students who are taught vocabulary with TPR-S obtain higher vocabulary's scores than those taught using translation?

1.3 Objective of the Study

In this research, the writer wanted to know the effectiveness of teaching vocabulary by using Total Physical Response-Story Telling (TPR-S) technique. She wanted to find out whether the students who were taught by using TPR-S obtained higher vocabulary's scores than those taught using translation or not.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used in this study was learning theory as proposed by Asher (in Richards & Rodgers, 1986).This theory points out that children learn new vocabulary by listening first before they learn to speak, and children will be able to recall the vocabulary items easily if they are combined with physical activities. Moreover, this theory also says that emotions have a great effect on learning. This theory is supported by Krashen (1981), Long (1983),

Caine and Caine's (1997), Jensen (1998), Foss (1994), Smith (1994) in Curtain & Dahlberg (2004). The theories above were discussed more deeply in Chapter II.

1.5 The Hypotheses

The problem of this study can be tentatively answered as follows:

Ho   : There is no significant difference between the English vocabulary achievement of the students who are taught by using TPR-S and those who are taught by means of translation.

Ha   : There is significant difference between the English vocabulary achievement of the students who are taught by using TPR-S and those who are taught by means of translation.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of Study

In conducting the research, the writer took two classes of the fourth grade students of elementary school of the year 2006 – 2007 as the subjects. Each class consisted of 25 students, so that there were 50 students who were taken as the subjects. Being aware that there are many aspects to teach in vocabulary teaching and learning such as such as spelling, the grammar of a new item, word formation and meanings, the writer limited the aspects to teach on meanings. Furthermore, since there are many aspects of meaning to teach such as denotation, connotation, affective meaning, appropriateness, synonym, hyponyms, polysemy, homonymy, homophone and translation, she only focused on denotation. It was because it dealt with the meaning of a word or phrase related to the real world (International Dictionary of English, 1995). That kind of meaning is that people mostly deal with in every day life. Besides that, since the subject of this study were elementary school students and the writer used stories to teach them, the words that were used must be simple. Moreover, the vocabulary items which were taught to the students were only verbs, nouns, and adjectives because they were the most common words which occurred in the stories. In addition, in regard to the time limitation, there were only six stories taken, and all of them were fables as given in the curriculum.

Since the time which was given to finish this study was limited, the writer did not see the results as a lifelong project. It was because the time spent to conduct the research was too short (only a month), so that the treatment given to

the students might not really influence the students. Finally, because the teacher who taught both experimental and control group was the writer, so there might be a little bias in this research.

1.7 Significance of the Study

By working on this research, hopefully the results would give beneficial contributions to the teaching of vocabulary. The writer expected that the findings would provide many benefits over traditional approaches to language teaching. It was hoped that the results of this study would enrich the number of effective teaching techniques especially to teach vocabulary to students, so that teachers would have wider opportunities to use different kinds of teaching activities and techniques in their classroom. They could also choose what technique was good for teaching vocabulary. Moreover, since Total Physical Response-Story Telling (TPR-S) eliminates the need for memorization of lengthy vocabulary lists and complex grammar rules, and develops an "ear" for language, it was expected that it would promote students' English fluency. Finally, the writer also hoped that the findings would also give some theoretical contribution to the development of the teaching itself.

1.8 Assumptions

This study was based on the following assumptions:

1. In order to have a good test, a pilot test was administered. Due to the limited number of classes, the writer took two classes of grade four of the year 2005 – 2006 to do the pilot test, and took two classes of grade four of the year 2006 – 2007 for the research. It was assumed that although the pilot test was administered to the students of the year 2005 – 2006, the test which had been revised was still valid to be administered to the students of grade four of the following year.

2. The two classes of grade four of the year 2006 – 2007 had nearly the same average of English report mark. It could be seen from the students' final mark after they did the final examination. These two groups also received the same materials and were taught by the same teacher. Thus, it was assumed that there were not any differences in terms of intelligence, treatments and materials that were received by both classes except the treatment that was used as vocabulary teaching technique to teach vocabulary items. Thus, the future differences vocabulary achievement between both classes would be only influenced and affected by the application of TPR-S in teaching vocabulary.

3. The writer herself was the teacher who taught both classes, so there was not any difficulty to adapt with the students as well as the situation. In addition, the writer has been teaching young learners for five years, so she did not have any difficulty in managing her classes. Finally, to minimize the bias occurred because the teacher taught both groups, the teacher designed the lesson plan for both group carefully.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

The key terms to be defined were:

1.9.1. Total physical response- story-telling

Total Physical Response-Story Telling in this study referred to teaching vocabulary by using stories and physical movement as well as gesture.

1.9.2. Translation

Translation in this study referred to teaching vocabulary by translating a story of the target language into the students' native language.

1.9.3. Vocabulary Achievement

Vocabulary Achievement in this study referred to the vocabulary scores students obtained at the end of the post-test.

1.10 The Organization of the Thesis

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter I deals with the introduction to the thesis including the background of the study, statement of the problems, the objective of the study, the hypotheses, scope and limitation of the study, significance of the study, assumptions, theoretical framework, definition of key terms, and the organization of the study.

Chapter II "Review Related Literature" deals with the theoretical background to the study that covered the theory of vocabulary, vocabulary teaching, aspects taught in vocabulary, Total Physical Response (TPR), types of TPR, Total Physical Response-Story Telling (TPR-S), the benefits of TPR-S, the procedures of TPR-S, Translation, and a previous study.

Chapter III is Research Methodology. It consists of the research design, the population and sample, variables, research instrument, data collection, treatment for control and experimental group, data analysis procedures and technique.

Chapter IV is Findings and Discussion. It deals with the results of the study and the discussion about it.

Chapter V "Conclusion" consists of the conclusion and summary, as well as the suggestions.