

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Language as a universal means of communication plays an important role in our life. With language, every aspect of human life especially communication can go on more smoothly. It is not a secret anymore that English is considered as the most important international language that is used in various fields by many countries. In Indonesia, English has also become an important foreign language to be learnt. Therefore, it is necessary for everyone to learn English.

Considering its importance, English should be taught as early as possible to children. Rubin and Thompson (1994: 4) state “the best time to learn another language. ”To enable children to learn English, children also should have sufficient knowledge of vocabulary. It is needed to build a meaningful sentence whether it is in the form of listening, speaking, reading, or writing. Furthermore, Allen (1983: 7) explains “without vocabulary, no one can speak or understand the language.” Having the same opinion with Allen, Rubin, and Thompson (1994:79) point out that one cannot speak, read, understand, and write if he/she does not know a lot of words. Thus, learning vocabulary is very important to children.

In teaching vocabulary to children, many English teachers usually give them word list that has to be memorized. In this technique, the teacher mentions both the words and the translations at the same time. However, this way of teaching has a negative side. According to Gunawan (2002: 125), teaching vocabulary using word list can rise the students’ boredom and fatigue. Children usually get bored easily. It

usually happens because the procedures of teaching that the teacher uses are almost the same from time to time so that they become monotonous. In addition, many students find difficulties in learning vocabulary from a list of words. Most of them tend to forget the words that have been learned easily. Morris as quoted by Gunawan (1999:2) supports this opinion by stating that this old method of presenting word list for vocabulary learning has been rejected since it is tedious, wasteful, and generally ineffective. In this case, the objective of teaching vocabulary cannot be achieved well if they easily get bored and forget the words.

Therefore, to help students, a teacher must try to find some ways to teach the students in learning vocabulary. One of the ways to lessen the boredom is by creating a nice and enjoyable atmosphere so that they will be motivated to get better achievement. There are some interesting ways that can be applied in the teaching learning process. Such as using drama, picture, comics, games, songs, and others. In this study, the use of TPR in teaching vocabulary to children becomes the writer's concern.

The writer chooses TPR because TPR appears to bring many advantages to the teaching of vocabulary. According to Asher, one of the advantages is that TPR creates facts which make for long-term comprehension (<http://www.tprsource.com/asher.htm>). Moreover, TPR creates fun and lively atmosphere to attract students' interest in learning the language. Scott and Ytreberg (1994: 6) support this idea, they say that children have an amazing ability to absorb language through activities that they find enjoyable. Further, TPR makes students enjoy the lesson and gives opportunities for them to use their senses so that they can learn best. To this point, Scott and Ytreberg

(1994: 5) also add that most activities for children should involve the senses and the movement.

For these reasons, the writer would like to use TPR technique as a means of teaching vocabulary to children. She has the purpose to find out the effect of using TPR technique in teaching vocabulary to the second grade of elementary schools students. She also believes that TPR technique can help students clarify the teacher's explanation to relieve the boredom and to rise the interest in learning English vocabulary.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Do second grade students of elementary school who are taught action verbs by using TPR show higher vocabulary achievement than second grade students of elementary school who are taught using word list?

1.3 Objective of the Study

To know whether the second grade of elementary school students who are taught action verbs by using TPR get a better vocabulary achievement than those who are taught using word list.

1.4 Significance of the Study

To give some positive inputs to the effective action verbs teaching technique which makes the students understand the concept of action verbs.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

There are two theories that support this study. The first one is about the theory of word list technique. The second one deals with the theory of Total Physical Response technique.

In teaching vocabulary to children, many English teachers still employ the word list technique as a convenient shortcut because it is very simple to be used. But, those advantages are against some experts' opinion. Asher states that word list does not help most students because there is no long-term understanding (<http://www.tprsource.com/asher.htm>). In line with this, Morris as quoted by Gunawan (1999: 2) points out that this old method of presenting a list of translated words for vocabulary learning has been rejected since it is tedious, wasteful, and generally ineffective. Rubin and Thompson (1994: 79) support this opinion by saying that teaching a large number of vocabularies by using a list of translated words technique is time and effort consuming. Further, they explain that words list becomes impractical simply because there are just too many words to learn.

Asher (2005) introduces the TPR technique as a solution offered to the difficulties in acquiring a second language. The intention of demonstration lesson is that the students achieve insight into a process or an operation, and the next logical step is that the students themselves attempt to perform what has been demonstrated (Bekkering, 1992: 39). TPR is based on the way that children learn their mother tongue. Asher claims that the process is visible when we observe how infants internalize their first language (<http://www.tprsource.som/asher.htm>). The focus of TPR technique is greatly emphasized on listening comprehension. Asher in Brown (1987: 163) mentions that children, in learning their first language appear to do a lot of listening before they

speak and the result will be their listening is accompanied by physical responses such as looking, smiling, laughing, moving, reaching, gasping, holding. In line with this, Gouin in Brown (1987: 163) explains that learners will easily retain a series of simple action associated with language. Action helps much for children in learning a language. Meaning in target language can often be conveyed through actions (Freeman, 1986: 114). They can understand the meaning directly by acting out the actions. Supporting this, Asher states that “TPR creates facts which make for long-term comprehension” (<http://www.tprsource.com/asher.htm>).

1.6 Hypothesis

The statistical hypothesis used in this study is:

Alternative Hypothesis (Ha): There is a significant difference between the vocabulary achievement of the students taught using TPR and those taught using word list.

To test the Hypothesis, the Null Hypothesis is made:

Null Hypothesis (Ho) : There is no significant difference between the vocabulary achievement of the students taught using TPR and those taught using word list.

1.7 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study is limited to the teaching of the action verbs by using TPR and word list technique only.

In this study, the population is the second grade students of Santa Clara Elementary School Surabaya.

The experimental group and the control group get different treatments. The experimental group receives vocabulary teaching through TPR, while the control group receives it through word list.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

There are many terms that are used in this study. In order to avoid misinterpretation or misunderstanding, the writer defines the following key terms:

1. Effect: change produced by an action or cause; result or outcome (Hornby, 1989: 385).
2. Teaching: it is a teacher's effort to help students to have clear understanding of what a word denotes or refers to, or to know the meaning of a word (Mukarto, 1989: 66)
3. Action verbs: verbs which express actions (Warriner, 1986: 13).
4. Total Physical Response: a technique in which students respond physically to oral commands (Shrum and Glisan, 1994: 62).
5. Word list: a list of new words that has not been taught yet that has meanings. It is used for helping people understand the meanings of the words easily. (Santi: 2004).
6. Vocabulary: total number of words that make up a language (Hornby, 1989: 1425).
7. Achievement: performance by a student in a course: quality and quantity of a student's work during a given period (Babcock, 1986: 16).

1.9 Organization of the Study

This study consists of 5 chapters. Chapter I is the introduction, containing the background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, theoretical framework, hypothesis, scope and limitation of the study, definition of key terms, and organization of the study. Chapter II presents the review of related

literature which describes the importance of vocabulary in language learning, types of vocabulary, the verb, teaching English to young learners, the characteristics of young learners, teaching vocabulary to young learners, the use of TPR in language learning, steps in teaching vocabulary using TPR, the use of word list in teaching vocabulary and the comparison between the writer's thesis and the previous study. Chapter III deals with research instrument, the test try out, treatment procedure, procedures of collecting data, the data reduction and procedures of data analysis. Chapter IV is about the findings of the study and the discussion of the findings. And chapter V presents the conclusion and some suggestions for further research.