

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background of the Study

Teaching English to children has become a popular thing in Indonesia. The parents in a great number enrolled their children to join the English club which is especially made for children. Since a few years ago the English club for children has been founded in many places. There are many choices for the parents to choose which one is the best for their children. However, teaching English for children is not as easy as teaching English for adults or teenagers because the children do not have their own motivation to learn English. On the contrary, the adults are easier to teach because they have already had their self-motivation to get acquainted with English because they realize that they need English for their future, their jobs or another reason.

The situation of teaching English to children as stated above, however, happened a few years ago when the time of teaching English to students of elementary school was still rare. Nowadays, many elementary schools, particularly in big cities, put the English language as a subject of the curriculum. According to 1994 curriculum, English is offered to elementary school as an optional local content. The students themselves do not get the English language only in an English club which they join. Their school has provided the foreign language, English, through the new curriculum that is curriculum 1994.

El-Helaly (1987: 49) states:

“Unlike adults, children are not self-motivated and do not have an immediate need to learn English. They are not concerned with jobs or university degrees that require a knowledge of English. The children communicate all their needs and experiences and receive new knowledge in their mother tongue. Therefore, the teacher of English has the challenging task of finding ways to motivate them.”

What El-Helaly is trying to say is that teaching English for children needs more attention than teaching English for adults because children do not have a motivation to learn English, so the English teacher should create some various methods in order to make the children feel interested in following the English lesson.

Mostly, the teachers of English create materials somehow to make the learners more motivated to learn English. As Carmen Argondizzo (1992:6) states that most children who start foreign language instruction do not have autonomous motivation to learn a foreign language.

In creating the materials the teacher should also consider the children's world. The world here refers to their home and other interesting activities for them, such as games, songs, ten role play play, pretending to be an adult and also for being a buyer and a seller. The teacher in teaching the children should consider their world and their maturational stage. The maturational stage means the level of the class where they study. Most children like to play with other children or to play with video games. This world, the children's world is often neglected by teachers in teaching them. The children's world here needs to be taken into account for successful foreign language learning.

In other words the writer would like to say that in teaching English to children teachers should do it through some activities which are suitable for the children. Another statement from El-Helaly (1987: 49) strengthens the previous idea. She states,

“because children are not self-motivated to learn a foreign language it must be presented to them through activities”.

There are various methods that deal with the children's world, such as songs, games, pictures and role play. Through the various methods above the children can enjoy learning English without getting bored.

In this study the writer focuses on the use of role play as an interesting activity to motivate the children in learning the vocabulary of English. In general, role play is used to improve students' ability in speaking a foreign language. Since they are still in the elementary school, the goal of teaching English is the mastery of vocabularies. The other skills like reading, listening, speaking and writing are taken into consideration too but the most important skill that they should master first is vocabulary. Without knowing the vocabulary, the four skills above will have no meaning. One student might be able to read a foreign language passage but it will be useless then because the student does not understand what he has read. Thus, through role play the students would be able to master the vocabulary since in this activity they should memorize the vocabulary which were united into some sentences. Indirectly, the students themselves will be more familiar with the vocabulary without being forced because in playing role play the people in general have to memorize the dialogue of each role. The same thing also happens in teaching English for children through role play. In his article “Dramatics in Language Teaching” Louis Tanous (1954) states, “the actor must memorize his lines so that his delivery will be accurate and confident.” In this article he emphasizes the memorization of this dialogue so that the actors can do the play/role play more lively and bravely enough.

Considering that vocabulary is a crucial thing in one's language, it is very important to teach vocabulary to students from elementary school where they are in the basic level before they go to the higher ones (levels). The suggested way which can be used by the teacher to make them master the vocabulary is by giving them role play activities in order to motivate them to learn the lesson.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the reasons explained in the background of the study stated above, the writer intends to conduct a study in order to answer the following questions:

1. Is there any significant difference between the vocabulary achievement of the students who are taught through role-play and those who are taught through wordlists?
2. Which technique can give better vocabulary achievement?

1.3 Objective of the Study

This study is intended to:

1. find out whether there is a significant difference between the vocabulary achievement of the students who are taught through role-play and those who are taught through wordlists.
2. decide which technique can give better vocabulary achievement.

1.4 Significance of the Study

In this study, the writer discusses a technique of teaching vocabulary through

role-play and is going to prove that role-play can motivate the children to improve the vocabulary mastery.

Hopefully, the result of this study can give encouragement to elementary school teachers to use role play activity in giving vocabulary exercises in order to motivate the students in learning vocabulary.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used for this study are vocabulary and role play.

- Vocabulary permeates everything we do in an English language class, whichever skill or language point is being practiced (Taylor, 1992:3). She adds that vocabulary is really important in communication because people primarily communicate by using words.
- Role play is defined as an exercise where the students are assigned fictitious roles from which they have to improve some kinds of behavior toward the other role characters in the exercise (Paulston, 1976:70).
- Behaviorist theory of learning display the learner as a passive receiver of information (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987:41). Learning, particularly the learning of a language, is an emotional experience, and the feelings that the learning process evokes will have a crucial bearing on the success or failure of the learning.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

There are some ways to improve students' vocabulary, such as memorizing word list, and reading a simple story or translating new vocabulary. Because there are

various methods which can be used to improve the learners' vocabulary such as story-telling, song, games and role play, the writer limits her study on the use of role play as a means to improve the children's vocabulary mastery. She chooses role play as a technique in teaching vocabulary since role play tends to emphasize memorization. Besides, the method of role play for teaching English can be done for all levels so the writer limits her study only for the elementary school students. The subjects for this study are from the fifth grade of elementary school.

1.7 Hypotheses

To answer the above question, the following hypotheses are stated:

Ho = There is no significant difference between the vocabulary achievement of the students who are taught through role play and those who are taught through wordlists.

Ha = There is a significant difference between the vocabulary achievement of the students who are taught through role play and those who are taught through role play.

1.8 Assumptions

This study was based on the following assumption:

- a. The fifth grade students belonging to the 1998-1999 school year have more or less the same level of competency in learning English. They have got English four years starting from Class I to Class IV.

- b. The materials or the dialogues given to the students are chosen according to the fifth grade students' level. They are taken from the book English for SD, V-A suggested to be used by Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan written by Ali, Kanudiharta.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

In this study there are four terms to be defined, they are as follows:

- a. Role play : A character/part played by an actor in a dramatic performance (Morris, 1975:1125).
- b. Children : Any person between birth and puberty or one who is childish or immature (Morris, 1975:233).

In this study, the writer takes the children in the age of 6-13.

- c. Vocabulary : A list of words and often phrases, usually arranged alphabetically and defined (Morris, 1975:1434).
- d. Achievement : Something that has been accomplished successfully especially by means of exertion, skill, practice or perseverance (Morris, 1975:11).

1.10 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter one deals with the introduction which comprises the background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, the significance of the study, theoretical framework, scope and limitation of the study, hypotheses, definition of key terms and organization of the thesis. Chapter

two presents review of related literature and related studies consisting of the problems posed in teaching English for children, vocabulary theory, learning theory, role play theory and motivation theory. Chapter three deals with the research methodology. Chapter four discusses the findings and interpretation of the findings. Chapter five deals with the conclusion and suggestion.