

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

In the past, teaching vocabulary to the students were not emphasized as the major part in learning English as a foreign language. However, as time goes by, vocabulary becomes an important thing in learning English as a foreign language. It is realized that most textbooks which contain modern technology and knowledge are written in English. Bowen and Marks (1994:90) state that vocabulary occupies the centre stage knowing that English is widely used to communicate with people in any field all over the world nowadays. As stated by Mc Carthy (1990:1) that "The single biggest component of any language course is vocabulary". Thus, it seems that every part of teaching English as a foreign language starts to focus on vocabulary.

It should also be noticed that vocabulary is important to make up words in order to make communication work out. Because if we have lots of words to express our feelings, we can understand and communicate with one another (Lyons.J,1981:4). Thus, teaching vocabulary as early as possible is considered essential.

Grant (1990:1) says that "Teaching of English to young children has become especially important in recent years". The writer often sees that English has been introduced even when they are still in kindergarten. However, the perfect age to get to know the English lesson better is two or three years earlier (it is

between 9 to 12 years old) (Jean Brewster, et.al,1991:23). The main purpose is to make a better approach for their benefit on their next level/English instruction (Jean Brewster, et.al,1991:23). Most of all is to make them able to recognize and produce a wide range of vocabulary items (Mary Spratt,1985:184).

However, in order to teach vocabulary to children successfully a teacher should be supported by a good technique. As we know that there are lots of new methods invented recently only to produce a working vocabulary, for example, in teaching vocabulary through songs or through games. The problem is what method is considered good. Or, what method is considered interesting and suitable with the students' level of development. The right method should be interesting and motivating. It should also enable the students to remember all the vocabulary taught (Dorothy F. Brown,1980:1). It is explained clearly by Harmer(1991:5) that "The method by which the students are taught must have some effect on their motivation. If they find it deadly boring they will probably become demotivated whereas if they have confidence in the method they will find it motivating". Harmer (1991:7) continues that "The method should be exciting and it should stimulate their curiosity". If the teacher has chosen the right method for them, the teacher should know that by using the right method, the students can get the vocabulary they need and, of course in accordance with their level of difficulty/development (Jeremy Harmer,1991:23-24). Once the method has a place in the students' heart the learning will take place automatically.

There are many ways of methods in teaching vocabulary. Two of them are teaching vocabulary in context and through pictures. We know that the first

method, i.e teaching vocabulary in context is considered as a good method for it can make the students recall the vocabulary easier under a topic category (Tim Bowen and Jonathan Marks,1994:94). Rubin(1994:82) says that "When trying to remember a word you can think of its context and the word will come back to you". Side(1990:151) also wants to support Bowen and Marks's opinion by saying that "Learning vocabulary is far more effective in context and not just in a long list of unrelated words". The point in using context is that students can relate the new vocabulary with their daily life in finding the meaning of it. Then, they can know the precise meaning if they want to communicate with each other.

The second method in teaching vocabulary is by using pictures. Using pictures, as a form of visual aid to teach vocabulary is a good method, too. According to Brewster, et.al(1991:89) "Visual support is very important to help convey meaning and to help students memorize new words. A great deal of vocabulary can be introduced by using illustration or pictures". While Gairns and Redman(1986:73) support Brewster's statement by saying that "Visual is extensively used for conveying meaning and is particularly useful for teaching vocabulary". For example, a set of pictures of sporting activities could be used as a means of presenting items such as skiing, sailing, climbing. Thus, teachers find that teaching through picture is very interesting and stimulating (Danuta Stanulewicz,1990:34).

Based on the experts' opinions elaborated above, the writer is interested and encouraged to ascertain the effectiveness of using pictorial context in teaching vocabulary with the consideration that a combination of picture and context will

be a great technique to teach vocabulary to children. Since most pictorial context books consist of beautiful pictures/illustrations which make the students pay attention to the lesson. As a result, students can accept the material, in this case vocabulary, more easily. As said by Brewster, et.al(1991:160) using pictorial context makes learning more memorable and fun. In relation to context, using pictorial context shows how a language is used in a different situation (Brewster,1991:160). The writer believes if the picture is well-chosen and the words are suitable for the young learners, then, vocabulary will be learned successfully.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

In line with the background of the study, the problem is stated as follows:

- What is the effect of using pictorial context in teaching vocabulary on the vocabulary achievement to the first year students of students of junior high school ?

## **1.3 The Objective of the Study**

Based on the statement of the problem, the aim of this study is to ascertain the effectiveness of using pictorial context in teaching vocabulary on the vocabulary achievement to the first year students of junior high school.

#### **1.4 Hypotheses**

There are two kinds of hypotheses that can be drawn in this study.

HA/Alternative Hypothesis: There is a significant difference on the vocabulary achievement of students who are taught by pictorial context and those taught without pictorial context. However, this alternative hypothesis is only the prediction that the writer made before the data are collected, so the null hypothesis is the opposite of it.

Ho/Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference on the vocabulary achievement of students taught by pictorial context and those taught without pictorial context.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study is expected to give a clear description of the importance of using pictorial context in teaching vocabulary. It is then expected to be a basis for selecting the strategies in teaching vocabulary so as to help the students widen their vocabulary.

#### **1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study**

The scope of this study is limited only to teaching vocabulary to the first year students of junior high school. The reason for choosing the first year students is at the age of 12/13 children have reached the last phase of memorizing. Therefore, it is necessary to equip the students with enough vocabulary and make it stable in their mind so that they will not find any difficulties in understanding

English reading texts. The writer also classifies the first year students into children group considering their child-like attitudes which they still bring from elementary school.

Here, as the subjects of the study, the writer will take three groups from the first year students of SLTPK St. Stanislaus I. One of the groups will be used as a try-out class. While the two groups will be divided into a control group and an experimental group. One class(experimental group) is taught through pictorial context and the other class(pilot group) is taught without pictorial context.

### **1.7 Definition of Key Terms**

To avoid misinterpretation that might happen when reading this thesis, the writer provides some definitions of the key terms.

#### **1. Vocabulary**

The total number of words which makes up a language (Hornby,1989)

#### **2. Pictorial**

Having or represented in pictures (Gondosetio, 1989)

#### **3. Context**

Sentence, paragraph, or longer unit of writing that surrounds a word and determines its meaning (Shepherd, 1973)

#### **4. Pictorial Context has the same meaning "Picture Book"**

A combination of picture and the text which work interdependently (Ehlers Zavala, 1997)

### **1.8 Organization of the Study**

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter one deals with the introduction of the study which includes background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, definition of key terms, and organization of the study. Chapter two concerns with some related literatures that support the writer's study. The methodology is described in chapter three. Chapter four concerns with the interpretation of the findings. The conclusion of this thesis is summarized in chapter five which also includes some suggestions to vocabulary teaching.