

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

English, as an international language in the world has been used by people in many aspects, such as business, education, and media. Therefore, mastering English as a foreign language is very necessary. English should be taught to student, as earlier as possible. Donoghue (2001:3) says that children will have better chances for successful language skills if they know earlier about the functions and nature of language. Primary or elementary school is regarded as an appropriate level to start teaching English. It is strengthened by Brewster (1991:23) who says that the perfect age to get to know English lesson is two or three years earlier (it is between 9 to 12 years old) because children at that age have facility for understanding and imitating what they hear and see so that they can make a better approach for benefit on their next level or English instruction.

In Indonesia, students start to learn English as they are in the fourth grade (Kurikulum Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Sekolah Dasar 1994). It is based on an idea that the earlier a learner learns a language the better she/he may acquire it. There are four basic skills language that need to master in learning English; they are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. To be successful in learning English, learning should be started since the young age. It surely includes the learning of vocabulary. As stated by Mc. Carthy (1990:1), The single biggest component of language course is vocabulary.

In the past, vocabulary teaching and learning was often given little priority in second language programs, but recently there has been a renewed interest in the nature of vocabulary and its role in teaching learning activities (Richards and Renandya, 2002:255). Richard and

Renanya also state that vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read and write. According to Bowen and Marks (1994:40), vocabulary occupies the center stage knowing that English is widely used to communicate with people in any field. Lyon (1981:4) also adds that vocabulary is important to make up words in order to make communication work out because if a learner has lots of words to express his/her feelings, he/she can understand and communicate with one another. Therefore, if a learner does not have a lot of words, he/she will certainly be unable to speak, read, understand, and write. That is why, vocabulary is very important to be taught to the students. In other words, vocabulary is one of the most important aspects of the foreign language learning.

Many teachers usually teach vocabulary by translating the words into the learners' mother tongue and give those words in the form of list to be memorized by the students. Many teachers use this way of teaching as a convenient shortcut because it is more practical and its preparation doesn't take so much time and effort. Nation (1980:18) also supports that large numbers of vocabularies can be learnt in a very short time by using list of words. In contrast, Rubin and Thomson (1994:79) said that teaching vocabulary through lists of words seems boring and monotonous. Besides, the words which are memorized will be easily forgotten by the students. In order words, giving the meaning of unknown vocabulary especially in list seems less effective.

Based on the writers' experience during her teaching practice at Kristus Raja Catholic Elementary School (SDK Kristus Raja), the writers' found that most of the students could not understand what the teacher says (listening skill); they could not understand the teacher words (reading skill); they could not express their ideas well both orally (speaking skill) and in written (written skill). This is because the writers found that the English teacher usually teaches

vocabulary by giving a list of words to the students to memorize. By memorization, in fact, the students can keep the words for a few days but they are unable to keep those words in mind for longer time, in other words the students cannot retain the vocabulary that they have learnt.

Therefore, in line with those problems, other ways of teaching vocabulary to children are required. Through this study, the writer intends to suggest the use of guessing activities in teaching vocabulary through the fifth graders of Kristus Raja Catholic Elementary School (SDK Kristus Raja). There are many activities that can be taught to the students by guessing. Games for example can be one of the techniques that are usually used in guessing. In guessing game the students can practice their vocabulary by guessing the words based on the descriptions of the object or subject. In this research, the writer used some activities such as, guessing the picture, who am I, back to the board, but in this research the writer mainly used guessing game to teach vocabulary to the students.

Games are applicable to all the basic language skills, i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing and a number of skills are often involved in the same game (Lee, 1995). Phillips (1997) states, Games in the language classroom help children to see learning English as enjoyable and rewarding. Playing games in the classroom develops the ability to cooperate, to compete without being aggressive (p. 85).

Meanwhile, Allen in his book Technique in Teaching Vocabulary (1983) states that language teachers are responsible for creating condition, which encourages vocabulary expansion, and well-chosen games can help the student acquire English words. Games are helpful because they can make students feel certain that words are important and necessary, because without those words, the object of the game cannot be achieved and a vocabulary game is one in which the learners' attention is focused mainly on words.

There are many types of games such as sorting, ordering, or arranging games, information gap games, matching games including guessing games which help children become familiar with new vocabulary in an enjoyable way (Slattery and Willis, 2001:49). Besides, Allen (1983:52) points out that guessing game, for example, create conditions in which the use of the target language is necessary for leading players to the correct guess.

Guessing games can be painless ways to develop or reinforce any number of concepts. “Guess What I am” or “Guess Who I am” for example, can be used to teach about animals, professions, or people in different age groups (baby, child, teenagers, young adult, middle-age adult, elderly person). “Guess What I’m doing” can be used to teach recognition in the target language of activities such as taking a bath, go fishing, doing homework, and so on (Richard-Amato and Patricia, 1988: 89). Therefore, the writer suggests guessing game as a technique to teach vocabulary for the students because guessing game can be used to teach to all students of different age with any topics. Besides, guessing game also deprives the students from boredom and makes them learn in an enjoyable way.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In connection with the title and the background of this study, a relevant research is formulated as follows :

“Is the effect of using guessing activities in vocabulary teaching significant to the students’ vocabulary achievement?

1.3 Objective of the Study

In accordance with research question, the objective of the study is to find out if there is any significant effect of using guessing activities on the students’ vocabulary achievement.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The expected result of this research is to give contribution to the teaching learning process, especially in the teaching of vocabulary to elementary school students. The use of guessing activitie is expected to be able to help the students improve their vocabulary. While for the field of vocabulary teaching, the use of guessing activities is expected to stimulate vocabulary teaching-learning activities in order to avoid students' boredom. The result of this research is also intended to give information to those who are interested in doing a similar research on this topic.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

There are various techniques to teach vocabulary to young learners some of which are by using songs, pictures, videos, and games. In this study, however, the writer focuses on guessing game as the activities to teach vocabulary to young learners, especially grade five as the sample on this research. There are two classes of grade five in Kristus Raja Catholic Elementary School, grade five A and B. The writer chose grade five class A as the sample and grade five class B the pilot class. Grade five class A is practical to be the sample in the research, because based on the writer observation in the teaching learning activity especially in grade five class A, their vocabulary achievement is still low. The writer's believes that by using guessing game and other guessing activities it can give challenge to the students in developing their vocabulary and it can entertain the students but does not cause the class to lose control. Besides focusing on the guessing activities, this study also focuses on teaching the three topics, namely sickness feelings, occupations, and weather. The materials are adapted from the students' textbooks.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misinterpretation on key-words used in this study, some key terms are defined as follow:

Effect : The power to produce an outcome or achieve a result. (Dictionary of English language, [htt: //dictionary reference.com](http://dictionary.reference.com))

Teaching : Showing or helping someone to learn how to do something, providing the knowledge and causing to know or understand (Douglas in Wibowo, 200: 34)

Vocabulary : The total number of words which (with rules for combining them) make up a language (A.S Honby. Oxford Advanced Dictionary of current English. 1974:978) In this research, it refers to the word list of occupation (such as teacher, doctor, nurse, pilot, actor, dancer, painter, barber, farmer, sailor, postman, typist, librarian), weather (such as cold, raining, stormy, hot, cloudy, snowing, sunny, windy, thunder, foggy), health & diseases (such as earache, sore throat, stomachache, toothache, measles, chickenpox, eyesore, fever, cough).

Achievement : Something accomplished successfully, especially by means of exertion, skill, practice, or perseverance. (Dictionary of the English Language, <http://dictionary.reference.com>). In this study, achievement is represented by test score.

Guess : To say or decide what you think is true, without being certain about it. (<http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/guess>).

Activity : An educational task that involves direct experience and participation of the student. (<http://wwwdefinitions.net/definition/activity>).

Guessing game: Guessing game is a game which a person or participant knows something and compete individually or in a team to identify to find out what it is. (Merriem Webster, 1986, p.1008)

1.7 Hypotheses

Experimental research needs statistical computation or hypothesis testing to decide whether there is significant difference as the effect of using guessing activities in teaching vocabulary.

In line with the research question, the research hypotheses are formulated as follows:

a. Null Hypothesis (Ho):

There is no significant effect of guessing activities on the students' vocabulary achievement.

b. Alternative Hypothesis (Ha):

There is a significant effect of guessing activities on the students' vocabulary achievement.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

There are three major theories that support this study. The first one is the theory of teaching vocabulary. The second one is concerned with the concept of games, and the third one deals with the use of guessing games in teaching vocabulary.

Vocabulary is all the words used by a particular person or all the words which exist in a particular language or subject. (Dictionary of Cambridge International Dictionary of English 1995: 1628). According to Piaget's theory, a child at the age of 7 – 12 years is always interested in recognizing and knowing new words, he stands to repeat new words repeatedly so that he will memorize them. (<https://www.msu.edu/~compeaua/piagettheory.html>).

According to Richards and Renandya (2002:255), vocabulary teaching and learning were often given little priority in second language programs, but recently there has been a renewed interest in the nature of vocabulary and its role in teaching learning activities. They also state that vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read and write.

There are many types of games, including guessing games which, as Slattery and Willis (2001) suggest, will help children become familiar with new vocabulary in an enjoyable way (p. 49). Besides, Allen (1983:52) points out, guessing game, for example, create conditions in which the use of the target language is necessary for leading players to the correct guess.

1.9 Organization of the Thesis

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter I is the Introduction, containing the Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Objective of the Study, Significance of the Study, Scope and Limitation of the Study, Definition of the Key Terms, Hypothesis, Theoretical Framework, and Organization of the Thesis. Chapter II discusses the Review of the Related Literature. Chapter III presents the Research Method. Chapter IV presents the research Finding and Discussion. Finally, Chapter V deals with the Conclusion and Suggestion.