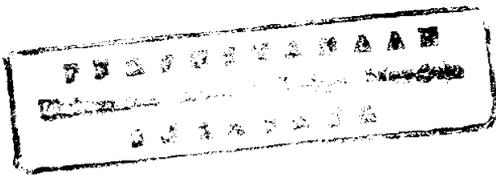


CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION



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1.1 Background of the Study

In the last decade, it is known that in Indonesia especially in big cities like Surabaya and Jakarta, English is becoming more and more important each day. Along with the progress of our educational systems, parents want their children to be able to communicate in English as their second language. This thought has become their major needs. Most parents believe that the younger the child is exposed to English, the quicker they will be able to speak the language. As a result, many new toddler classes, playgroups, and pre-elementary, which use English as their means of communication, start mushrooming here and there.

One of the schools in Surabaya that uses English as the means of communication is Sekolah Ciputra, an **International Baccalaureate School**, that has been established for more than ten years. It uses three languages: English, Chinese, and Indonesian as its means of communication. Sekolah Ciputra provides the community with a Toddler, a Playgroup, a Pre-elementary, an Elementary, a Junior and Senior High School level.

The school uses the IB Curriculum. It offers the IB Primary Years Programme, IB Middle Years Programme and IB Diploma Programme. The IB Primary Years Programme is designed for students aged 3 to 12, and focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer, both in the classroom and in the world outside. The IB Middle Years Programme is designed for students aged

11 to 16, and provides a framework of academic challenge that encourages students to embrace and understand the connections between traditional subjects and the real world, and become critical and reflective thinkers. The IB Diploma Programme is designed as an academically challenging and balanced programme of education with final examinations that prepares students, normally aged 16 to 19, for success at university and life beyond.

Every programme is taught in English and students are also expected to speak in English in the school environment. In Sekolah Ciputra, especially in the Primary Years Programme (PYP) level, English grammar is not taught explicitly. The teachers only focus on English literacy and communication skills. This situation is supported by Krashen's theory about second language acquisition.

According to Krashen (1982), English language acquisition can occur either inside and/or outside the classroom. English acquisition inside the classroom can be referred to the formal communication that happened in the teaching and learning activities if the focus is not in the form but the content. While English acquisition outside the classroom is the natural communication happened amongst people who speak English in whatever occasions.

According to Krashen and Terrel (1984: 39-51), there are factors of acquisition, they are: individual differences, motivation, nature of input, and age differences.

Individual differences. There are basically three types of language acquirers: 1) monitor over-users; 2) under-users; and 3) optimal users. Monitor over-users usually have a hesitant and over careful style of speaking. Under-users

do not seem to use conscious grammar at all. They are friendly, love to talk to people and are not embarrassed to make mistakes. Optimal users are those who feel they must know the rule for everything and entirely trust their feelings or grammars in second language. They are those who use learning as a real supplement to acquisition. They keep grammar in its place and use it to fill gaps in acquiring competence.

Motivation. There are two types of motivation; they are integrative and instrumental motivations. Both of them are very important in the success of second language acquisition. Lambert and Spolsky (cited by Ngadiman, 1992), found that integrative motivation is essential for successful second language learning. While Yasmineen and Lukman, 1972 (cited by Ngadiman, 1992), found that those with higher instrumental motivation score higher in test of English proficiency. Based on these findings, Brown (1987) pointed out that some learners in some contexts are more successful in learning a language if they are using integrative motivation and others in different contexts benefits from an instrumental motivation.

Nature of input. Lightbown, 1986 (cited by Ngadiman, 1992), stated that input to the target language in communicative setting is necessary to activate language acquisition process. However, not all kinds of input can function for the activation of second language acquisition process.

There are several criteria to make the input become intake. First, the input must be comprehensible, which according to Long (1993), there are three ways of making input comprehensible. The first is by using structures and vocabulary that

the learners already know; second is by using here-and-now orientation, which enables the learners to make use of the linguistic and extra-linguistic contexts and their general knowledge to interpret language that they do not know; third is through the modification of interactional structure of conversation.

Second, input must be interesting and relevant, since this kind of input makes the learners give a full attention to the content of the message given by the teachers. Third, since the focus of acquisition is not in the form but the message, and there are individual differences in the rate of acquisition, input must not be grammatically sequenced. Then the fourth criteria, input must be sufficient quantity. The learners will start talking after they have enough competence by having active listening through the input.

Age differences. There has not been a clear agreement about this. So far, there are three different research results. First, Snow and Hoefnagel-Hölhe (1978) who studied English speakers acquiring Dutch in Holland, age groups: 3-5, 6-7, 8-10, 12-25, and adults, Ervin-Tripp (1974) who studied English speakers acquiring French in Switzerland, age groups: 4-6 and 7-9, and Swain (1981) who studied tenth-grade students who began French immersion program at age 5 or age 12, found out that adolescents and young adults are faster learners in the initial stages of second language acquisition. However, Patkowski (1980), and Johnson and Newport (1989, 1991) who studied learners who arrived to USA before three and those who arrived before nine, found out that child learners are ultimately more successful second language learners than adolescents/ adults. Different from both, Bailey, Madden and Krashen (1974), Dulay and Burt (1973), and Meisel, Clahsen

and Pienemann (1981) found out that second language development appears similar across child and adult learners.

In Sekolah Ciputra, IB PYP has got subject-specific scope and sequence. The English scope and sequence is about language in general, not on the specific language skills and it shows some expectations. The English scope and sequence have been organized into four age ranges: 3-5 years, 5-7 years, 7-9 years, and 9-12 years. (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2005)

In each age range, the scope and sequence is divided into three parts: Oral Communication (Listening and Speaking), Written Communication (Reading and Writing), and Visual Communication (Viewing and Presenting).

English lessons in Sekolah Ciputra are taught by teachers from UK, Canada and Australia. They are assisted by the Indonesian teachers of various disciplines whose IELTS score is 5.5 and above. However, the students' English has not reached the target as the school has expected. Most of them, especially the young learners, still use mixed language. One of the possible reasons could be the students' vocabulary acquisition. However, no research on English vocabulary acquisition amongst the young learners has been done yet. Therefore, the writer would like to see how young learners in Sekolah Ciputra aged between five to seven and seven to nine acquire English as a second language.

1.2 Statements of the Research Question

The research question that will be answered in this study is:

- How is the English vocabulary acquisition of five to seven year-old students and seven to nine year-old students?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

In relation to the research question, this study aims at finding out:

- The English vocabulary acquisition of five to seven year-old students and seven to nine year-old students.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the theories of Krashen's theory of second language acquisition, which covers factors affecting second language acquisition, and the theory of vocabulary acquisition. Second language acquisition is the process of picking up another language after the first one (Ngadiman 1992).

According to Krashen (1984), there are two independent systems of second language: 'the acquired system' and 'the learned system'. The 'acquired system' or '**acquisition**' is the product of a subconscious process very similar to the process children undergo when they acquire their first language. It requires meaningful interaction in the target language - natural communication - in which speakers are concentrated not in the form of their utterances, but in the communicative act.

In addition, Krashen's monitor hypothesis and input hypothesis are very crucial in the development of second language acquisition. Krashen's monitor hypothesis developed the types of input and ways to obtain input to develop second language acquisition.

Supported by Piaget's stages of cognitive development theory, there are stages in a child's language development. The stages are sensorimotor period (years 0 – 2), preoperational period (years 2 – 7), concrete operational period (years 7 – 11), and formal operational period (years 11 and up).

There are factors that influence how young learners acquire English as a second language. According to Reeves, Hirsh-Pasek, and Golinkoff (1998), there are five important factors that influence how learners acquire the second language vocabulary. They are:

Frequency. The more a learner listen, read and use a particular vocabulary, the more he/ she will retain it.

Imageability and Concreteness and Abstractness. Words that can be imaged easily will have the more possibilities to be acquired first.

Semantics. When a learner can name their semantic associates of the word, he/ she will be able to acquire that word faster.

Grammatical Class. The grammatical class is really helpful for learners in order to acquire words better.

Phonology. Phonology is also very helpful in acquiring words, such as homophones. A learner will find it a lot easier to acquire words with the same sound of words.

They can all influence the speed and accuracy of access to second language vocabulary.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Since there is no significant agreement in the effect of age on vocabulary acquisition, this study is intended to find the result of the acquisition on English vocabulary. Furthermore, the finding of the study can give contributions to teachers in:

- finding the right strategies on how to arrange/organize the material in teaching English vocabulary
- deciding the teaching strategy

1.6 The Scope of the Study

The writer has limited her study entitled “The English Vocabulary Acquisition of Young Learners in Sekolah Ciputra Surabaya” Since the writer has limited time to do the observation, the study is delimited to young learners between five to seven years old and seven to nine years old.

1.7 Assumption

To support the argument that acquisition happened both inside and outside the classroom, the writer has two assumptions:

1. The students are mentally healthy and have a natural capacity to acquire language.

2. Students are exposed to meaningful communication naturally both inside and outside the classroom.

1.8 Definition of the Key Terms

There are some key terms needed to be explained in order to avoid the misinterpretation, they are:

1. **Acquisition** is a subconscious processes whereby linguistic rules are develop from exposures to a language in a natural or natural-like setting (Krashen 1982).
2. **Second Language Acquisition** is the process of picking up another language after the first one. (Ngadiman 1992)
3. **English Vocabulary Acquisition** is the process of picking up English vocabulary.
4. **Young Learners** are students aged five to seven and seven to nine.
5. **Cross-Sectional Design** is a method of collecting data from a relatively large sample of learners at one point of their language development.
6. **High Frequency Vocabulary** is a word that appears many more times than most other words in spoken or written language.