



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background of the Study

English plays an important role in many kinds of international activities, such as science, international aids and administration, pop music and the global entertainment industry, aviation, and shipping. It participates as a formal language in international trade and bilateral and multilateral relationships between countries. It is used as one of the formal languages in the United Nations Organization. Many scientific books which are published all over the world also use English. Even in the international events, like in the opening or closing ceremony of the Olympic games, ASEAN games, or SEA games, English is used.

In Indonesia, based on the 1994 curriculum, English is a foreign language which is important for the development of knowledge, technology and arts as well as the relationships between countries. The teaching of English can be started from the fourth grade of elementary school on condition that it is assumed to be necessary by the society surroundings. The existence of capable English teachers to conduct the teaching-learning process is also an important matter to consider. The 1994 curriculum states:

”Mata pelajaran Bahasa Inggris dapat diajarkan di SD bilamana dianggap perlu oleh masyarakat di daerah yang bersangkutan dan didukung oleh adanya guru yang berkemampuan untuk mengajarkan mata pelajaran tersebut. Oleh sebab itu, pengajaran

Bahasa Inggris diselenggarakan sebagai muatan lokal. Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris di SD dapat dimulai di kelas IV. (page 1)

According to the 1994 curriculum, the decision to claim whether it is necessary or not to have the English language taught to the elementary school pupils depends on the society. It means that having English taught to the elementary school pupils is optional. The teaching of English at elementary school is held as the local content. It also concerns with the immediate needs of the students, for example in Bali, the teaching of English to the elementary school pupils always gets the first priority since Bali is always visited by many tourists whose language is mostly English. In Surabaya itself, the teaching of English to the elementary school pupils also becomes the first choice.

Besides the society, a competent teacher is also an important factor to consider in conducting the teaching of English to the elementary school pupils. Without competent English teachers, the teaching of English would be misleading. The pupils who are taught by the incompetent English teachers will have the risks for not having enough English skills. The fourth grade of elementary school pupils are still young. They are about 10 years old. At this age, the pupils' brain is prepared to learn a language easily. They are in the critical period for language learning. Lenneberg as quoted by Adisutrisno (1995:3) states:

"... there is critical period for language learning. It starts when the brain has matured enough to begin acquiring language, at roughly a year and a half. And it ends when the brain has completely matured, at about fourteen years."

Lenneberg says that the 10 year-old elementary school pupils are in the critical period of learning language. The critical period is the period where a child can learn a language easily, that is from the age of one and a half until the age of fourteen or before puberty. In the critical period, the brain is prepared to acquire language easily. It will have completely matured when they reach puberty. During the critical period, the ability of the pupils to acquire language is high. Pupils will get and remember what is taught to them easily. The pupils' ability to acquire language will become less when the brain has completely matured. In this case, the teaching of English by incompetent English teachers must be avoided so that pupils will have the correct English skills. In this study, the investigator believes that if the fourth grade of elementary school pupils are considered to be good to start learning a language, then the kindergarten school pupils would be better because they are only about 3 to 5 years of age.

After knowing when is the best period for the children to learn a language, another consideration should appear for the English teachers to know what are the best material to be taught first, the language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) or language elements (pronunciation, spelling, grammar, vocabulary). Kufaishi (1988:42) states that students' listening comprehension, writing and reading abilities hampered by their vocabulary. People often say that they want to be able to speak, read, listen or write in a certain language, but their acquisition of words in the language is not sufficient. If one wants to be able to speak, then he or she has to recognize at least some words that he or she is going to utter and make sure that the words are

understandable to others. On the contrary, when a person says that he or she wants to be able to listen to someone's speech in a certain language, he or she also has to recognize the words in the language. If he or she does not understand at all the meaning of words in the sentences which are uttered by the other person, then he or she will never be able to understand what the other person is saying. In other words, to acquire language skills, people have to acquire the words in the language. Even if they want to be able to pronounce well, to spell correctly or to learn grammar, they will never get away from words. What people want to pronounce is words. What people want to spell correctly is also words. Can people do grammar exercises without knowing at all the meaning of the words used? The answer is 'No'! Imagine that they have to fill in the blanks with a correct preposition if they do not know the meaning of 'on', 'in', 'beside', etc. Accordingly, when people learn a language, they have to recognize first the words of the language.

The kindergarten school pupils have different interest from adults in learning language. Teachers should be sensitive to find out interesting ways to arouse the pupils' interests in learning the language. Teachers should give the pupils a special way of teaching to make them more enthusiastic to learn the language. The different ways of learning a language between children and adults should be considered in any teaching learning, including the process of teaching-learning of English vocabulary to kindergarten school pupils. Steven (1983:7) says, "... the kind of teaching which is appropriate to a young child is different from the kind of teaching that is most helpful

to an adult learner.” For example, if we use explanation and translation in vocabulary teaching, it might be helpful to adults, but not for the pupils.

Children are enthusiastic to see, feel, touch, or even smell things. They need to be exposed to a real situation or at least the correct representation of real situations.

Cypher (1964:176) states:

In the early stages of instruction, when the young child is learning to recognize objects in the world around him, it is important for him to gain true concepts, to gain the ability to identify and recognize various phenomena. To do this, he must be exposed either to reality itself or to a correct representation of reality. (Cypher, 1964:176)

She says that when children learn a language, it is important for them to have an opportunity to come into contact with reality or the correct representation of reality. ✓

To provide the children with the reality or the correct representation of reality, teachers can use either realia or pictures in the teaching-learning process. Realia provide the children with reality while pictures can serve as representation of reality. According to Kreidler (1968:1), the using of pictures is one recognized way of representing real situations which would be impossible in any other way. The using of pictures replaces realia when for a certain situation reality cannot be performed. Many actions, such as closing a door or opening a window can be demonstrated in a classroom. Other actions, such as riding a bicycle, walking in the park would be quite difficult situations to performed. In this case, pictures are used.

The possibility of using realia and pictures as techniques to teach children arouses the investigator's curiosity to find out which one gives a better effect to the result of language learning in children. There are library and experimental studies about using pictures to teach vocabulary to elementary school students or junior high school students, but so far there has been no study about using realia to teach vocabulary to kindergarten pupils. Due to the fact that there are no previous studies about using realia in teaching vocabulary to kindergarten pupils, the investigator would like to do an experimental study on using realia as a means to teach vocabulary to kindergarten school pupils.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the above background, one main question is raised: "Is teaching vocabulary by using realia to children more effective than teaching vocabulary by using pictures?"

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objective of the investigator of accomplishing this research is to investigate the effectiveness of realia as a means to teach vocabulary to children as language learners.

1.4 Hypothesis of the Study--

Concerning the problem statement proposed in this study, the investigator makes the following hypothesis:

a. The Alternative Hypothesis:

There is significant difference on the vocabulary achievement between the students who are taught by using realia and the students who are taught by using pictures.

b. The Null Hypothesis:

There is no significant difference on the vocabulary achievement between the students who are taught by using realia and the students who are taught by using pictures.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The idea of using realia as a means to teach vocabulary to children is expected to be a useful consideration for the kindergarten school teachers in choosing an appropriate media for teaching English vocabulary. The investigator hopes that the idea presented here will be of some help to carry out an effective way of teaching-learning process which will result in a better vocabulary achievement for the children later.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

In view of the fact that learning a language will be more easily if it is done during the critical period (starting from one and a half to fourteen years old), in this

study the investigator deals only with the TK A kindergarten school pupils who are about at the age of four. The reason of dealing only with TK A pupils and not with TK B pupils is because in doing this study the investigator has to adjust the materials with the school's lesson plans. The investigator found that the TK B pupils have been taught about 'parts of body' and if the experiment is done to the TK B pupils, the result will not be valid.

Considering the fact that children would be more enthusiastic and eager when using their senses like touching, smelling, and seeing things, the investigator uses realia as a means to teach vocabulary to the kindergarten school pupils. By using realia, the words taught to the pupils must be words which could be easily seen, touched and smelled. Therefore the teaching of vocabulary would be limited to only the teaching of concrete nouns.

Since the pupils learn vocabulary more easily when they have already been familiar with the words in their native language or used the words in their daily activities, the vocabulary chosen in this study is about 'My Body'. The reason of choosing vocabulary about 'My Body' is because the kindergarten school pupils are already familiar with their body. They have recognized parts of their body in their native language and they can even see and touch their own body.

In short, in doing this study the investigator deals only with the teaching of the English vocabulary of concrete nouns about 'My Body' to the TK A kindergarten school pupils who are at the age of about four.

1.7 Assumption

The subjects of this study are kindergarten school pupils. They are at the age of about four who need to be exposed to reality when learning vocabulary. The pupils are curious to know the names of things, how those things are like. They are enthusiastic to touch and feel those things. In this study, the pupils have recognized the materials concerned in their native language which makes them easy to understand the words in English.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

1.8.1 Children as Language Learners

Children are not self-motivated to learn English. They have to be stimulated by their teachers to make them interested in learning the language. The way children learn a language differs from the one used by adults. They have their own interests and ways in learning language. When children learn a language, they need to be active rather than passive. Children usually learn by using the language. By talking, they can memorize new words or phrases more easily.

1.8.2 Cognitive Learning in Children

Klausmier in Levin and Allen (1976:5-14) proposes four progressive stages of conceptual learning and development. At the first level, the concrete level, children are able to recognize a new object that is exactly the same as the one previously

experienced. At the second level, the identity level, children are able to recognize that a new object is the same although it is seen in a different form. At the third level, the classificatory level, children are able to determine that two different instances of the same concepts are equivalent. At the most complex level, the formal level, persons are able to provide the technical socially accepted definition of the concepts.

1.8.3 The Critical Period

The critical period of the development of human language is from about the age of one and a half years to puberty. Lenneberg as quoted by Adisutrisno (1995:3), states:

”...there is critical period for language learning. It starts when the brain has matured enough to begin acquiring language at roughly a year and a half. And it ends when the brain has completely matured at about fourteen years.”

There are two necessary requirements for language development: (1) a human brain and (2) sufficient exposure to language during this critical period between the age of one and a half years and puberty. In short, normal language acquisition cannot occur naturally beyond the critical period.

1.8.4 Vocabulary Teaching

Words are divided into two parts: function words and content words. Function words include noun determiners, auxiliaries, qualifiers, prepositions, coordinators,

interrogators, includers, and sentence linkers. Content words include nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. A noun is sub-divided into abstract nouns and concrete nouns. Some examples of abstract nouns are 'beauty', 'joy', 'love', etc while some examples of concrete nouns are 'pencil', 'book', 'table', etc.

In teaching vocabulary to children, teachers should know first the appropriate criteria. They should know the frequency and the usefulness of words. The more often a word is spoken by a person, the more appropriate it is to be taught to children. If a word is useful for children, then it is appropriate for the children to learn.

1.8.5 Realia

Realia includes: (1) people, (2) models, (3) mock-ups, (4) objects and events. People is a kind of realia which is the most real of all other types of realia. They are alive and can be brought into the classroom. It is a suitable media when we are teaching the children about people's occupations and parts of body. A model is a representation of the real thing. It can be reductions or enlargements. Mock-ups is a type of realia which omits other details which are not relevant to the objectives of the study. This type of realia is preferred when teaching higher level students during the biology class. Objects and events is a type of realia which refers to material things and a happening or occurrence that can be seen or touched. This type of realia would be appropriate when we are dealing with historical things.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

1. **Abstract** is any sorts of things which cannot be perceived by human sense (seen, touched, or smelled) and it is not easy to understand through human sense. It cannot be described by words. It expresses a quality which cannot be measured and people's opinion about it will not always be the same, for example: beautiful. People's opinion about the word 'beautiful' is not the same. Some people may say the picture is beautiful; but for others it is not.
2. **Concrete** is a material, perceptible existence or belongings that can be perceived by the sense (seen, touched or smelled). It is real, particular and specific things. People will always have the same image of what they are talking, for example: book. When people talk and they mention the word 'book', they will think of the same object in their minds.
3. **Realia** is a term used to indicate actual, authentic material of all kinds, including people. It is presented to pupils as a stimuli for direct observation. This can be accomplished by either bringing the things into the classroom or taking the pupils to where the things are.
4. **Vocabulary** is words or phrases which label the parts of material to be learned and which are necessary for students to use in talking and writing about it. It is usually arranged in alphabetical order and defined or otherwise identified. It has to be acquired by people in order to communicate with others. In this study, the vocabulary concerned is about "My Body", such as ear, eye, knee, foot, etc.

5. **Word Frequency** is the number of words repeated, used, or uttered by people in a given period.
6. **Children** are kindergarten school boys or girls who are at the age of about four in the period before puberty.

1.10 Organization of The Study

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter I discusses about Introduction which consists of Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Objectives of the Study, Hypothesis of the Study, Significance of the Study, Scope and Limitation of the Study, Assumption, Theoretical Framework, Definition of Key Terms, and Organization of the Study. Chapter II deals with Review of Related Literature, Chapter III is about Research Methodology which includes Research Design, Population and Sample, The Materials, The Treatments, The Instruments, The Item Analysis, Procedure of Collecting Data, and Technique of Data Analysis. Chapter IV discusses the Findings and Interpretation of the Findings, and Chapter V is the Conclusion and Suggestions.