

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

The role of English becomes more important almost in every aspect. Crystal (1997:3) points out that English is considered as a global language. The use of English is getting broader and more frequent not only in communication but also in movies, songs, internet, advertisements, and also news. Modern technologies such as smart phones, tablets and computer games also use English as the prominent language. Those are the reasons why learning English nowadays is important. Mastering English gives a lot of advantages both in the present and future world because, according to Verghese (2007:1), English is the common means of communication between people of different nations and it is also the world's most widely spoken language.

Learning English means learning the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and the three language components (vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation). Among those components, vocabulary takes the biggest and most important part. According to Linse (2006:121), vocabulary is the collection of words that an individual knows. Based on Smith's (2008:108) opinion, rich vocabulary allows people to be effective communicators and readers. The statement shows that vocabulary is very important and it is really needed to be learnt first than the other English components and skills.

According to Lougheed (2008:288), childhood is the best time to learn foreign language because the minds of the children are ready to learn many new things. Lougheed also adds that it is much harder to make children fluent in a foreign language if they wait until they are older to study a foreign language. The best time for a person to start studying foreign language is when he/she is still young. Moreover, children nowadays are exposed to English more than those in the old days. Whether they like it or not, they have to learn English in order to keep up with other children, not only in playing but also in studying at school.

In this study, the writer would like to suggest TPRS (Total Physical Response Storytelling) as one of interesting and fun techniques to teach vocabulary to young learners. According to Flora (2009:12), TPRS is when teacher tells a story while asking many questions to the children and children contribute by acting out the story. By using TPRS, English teachers can avoid the monotonous English lesson and make the lesson more interesting, fun, and exciting. In accordance with the fact that young learners are active and fond of stories, Bromley (2002:44) states that TPRS is good for verbal or linguistic, interpersonal and bodily or kinesthetic learning by providing some physical movements and stories. Besides, Bromley also states that by using TPRS, students acquire and practice vocabulary using a variety of communication skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, gesturing, acting, and storytelling. In this present study, the writer would like to conduct an experiment in order to find out the effect of using TPRS in motivating the students to learn English vocabulary and to achieve better vocabulary achievement.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Based on the background of the study, the research problem is stated as follows “Do the third grade students of Elementary school who are taught vocabulary using TPRS have better vocabulary achievement than those who are taught using word lists?”

## **1.3 Objective of the Study**

The objective of the study is to find out whether the third grade students of Elementary school who are taught vocabulary using TPRS have better vocabulary achievement than those who are taught using word lists.

## **1.4 Significance of the Study**

Related to the research problem stated above, this study is expected to give teachers positive contribution and inputs in the field of teaching English especially in teaching vocabulary to young learners. This study is expected to open the insight of English teachers of young learners by offering TPRS as a new alternative technique in teaching vocabulary in order to reduce young learners' boredom in class.

## **1.5 Scope and Limitation**

The subjects of this study are the third grade students of Elementary school which consist of 81 students all together from 3 classes. The reason why third grade students of Elementary school are chosen is because a lot of new words, especially action verbs are taught to them and they also love stories. Therefore, to motivate them to learn new words in English, the writer uses TPRS (Total Physical Response Storytelling) technique.

This study is limited to the teaching of action verbs to the third grade students of Elementary school. The writer chooses action verbs because action verbs are the most suitable kind of vocabulary to be presented by using TPRS and this topic is one of the topics taught to the third grade students of Elementary school.

## **1.6 Theoretical Framework**

The theory underlying this study is constructivism as introduced by Piaget. As Piaget stated in Santrock (1999:38), children are active learners. They construct knowledge actively when learning new things. As stated by Santrock (1999:38), Piaget proposed the following stages of cognitive development:

- Period of sensorimotor intelligence (birth to approximately 2 years old)

It is when the children learn by interacting physically with the environment to recognize things and objects

- Period of preoperational thought (approximately 2 to 7 years old)

It is when children are not able to think abstractly and need concrete things.

- Period of concrete operations (approximately 7 to 11 years old)

It is when children have enough experiences to think logically.

- Period of formal operations (approximately 11 to 15 years old)

It is when children are able to use the abstract thinking like adults.

In this thesis, the writer takes more concern to children in the concrete operational stage (7 to 11 years old), who are commonly at Elementary school. According to Piaget, children in this stage respond better through concrete things than abstract ones. They cannot yet imagine the necessary steps which are too abstract. Children in this stage do best performance when concrete things and experiences are provided. To construct their own knowledge, children need to be physically and mentally engaged in their learning. Piaget adds that the teacher should design the class situation that allows the children to learn by doing. Holding the principle, the writer proposes TPRS (Total Physical Response Storytelling) to give physical experiences to the students about the target vocabulary and experiences in acting out the target vocabulary either individually or in groups.

## 1.7 Hypothesis

Since this is an experimental study, hypotheses are needed. There are two hypotheses made in this study:

- HA / alternative hypothesis

There is significant difference between the vocabulary achievement of students who are taught using Total Physical Response Storytelling (TPRS) and those who are taught using word lists.

- HO / null hypothesis

There is no significant difference between the vocabulary achievement of students who are taught using Total Physical Response Storytelling (TPRS) and those who are taught using word lists.

## 1.8 Definition of Key Terms

There are some terms in this study that need to be defined to avoid misunderstanding. Those are as follows.

### **TPRS**

**(Total Physical Response  
Storytelling)**

TPRS in this study allows the students to be active learners, produces quick results and does not involve the use of textbooks. TPRS which combines TPR and Storytelling is an activity to tell stories with some physical movements and mimics to provide excitement, motivating lesson and relaxed

teaching-learning activities (Cantoni,1999).

**Word List**

Word list is a list that contains sound or combination of sounds (or the written/ printed symbols) forming a unit of the grammar or vocabulary of a language. However, word list in this study is a written list of English vocabulary with its Indonesian equivalent given by the teacher (Hornby, 1975).

**Vocabulary Achievement**

Vocabulary achievement is the learner's vocabulary accomplishment as represented by their scores gained in a test after the learning process (Brown, 2001).

**1.9 Organization of the Study**

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 presents the introduction, significance of the study, hypothesis, scope and limitation of the study, theoretical framework, definition of key terms, and organization of the study. Chapter 2 concerns with the review of related literature and the previous study. Chapter 3 deals with the research method. Chapter 4 deals with data analysis, interpretation of the findings, and discussions. Finally, Chapter 5 concerns with the conclusion and suggestions.