

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Listening, speaking, reading and writing are four language skills that should be mastered in English. Students will be able to master all the four language skills if they know enough vocabulary. The weakness in mastering vocabulary is often assumed as the main problem for people who want to learn a language. Learning a foreign language is basically a matter of learning the vocabulary of that language (Wallace, 1984). To be able to express ourselves throughout the language we need vocabulary to support us in expressing what we want to say, both in written and verbal communications.

Young learners may find it difficult to express their ideas through their writing because of their lack of vocabulary. The same case is true when students take an English test; they will have difficulty in reading and understanding the topic if their vocabulary is poor. Therefore, vocabulary plays an important role in mastering the four skills of the English language as a foreign language, especially for young learners.

Teachers have to be concerned about finding an appropriate teaching method which matches their stage of cognitive development and characteristics, especially for students to master English vocabulary.

Total Physical Response (TPR) is one of the methods which is used in teaching vocabulary. TPR is a language teaching method that attempts to teach language through physical (motoric) activity built around the coordination of speech and action (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

“Vocabulary is a teaching topic which lends itself very easily to the game approach” (Wallace, 1984, p. 41). The use of language games has been widely used recently especially ‘Simon Says’ game. It is a game based on TPR method, which engages in giving commands, listening skill and physical movement (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). TPR introduces a method which can build a happy atmosphere in the classroom and engages the students to listen, see and respond to or practice what teacher does. As a result, the students will not feel forced to memorize the vocabulary that the teacher has given them.

“It is a common place that young children learn better through play or at least they can be induced to go along with teaching that is tempered by ‘fun’ activities” (Rixon, Shelagh, 1995, p.46). The fact that children are absorbed in “fun” in language classroom has made the researcher attracted to find out how well the students can absorb English vocabulary through an activity called ‘Simon Says’ game.

Listening is a skill that many children, especially foreign language learners, find difficult to master. With foreign language learners, difficulties with sound discriminations, speed of delivery, length of utterance and time allowed for

assimilation make listening an even more demanding task (Anne & Slaven, 1995). 'Simon Says' game is one of the games that can be used to improve the students' listening skill and to have them listen carefully to the command that is given before they respond to it.

The researcher tries to use the activity of 'Simon Says' game to make vocabulary learning become more enjoyable and understandable, while at the same time the researcher challenged the students to succeed by demanding an active response.

Based on these facts, the method of TPR namely 'Simon Says' game in teaching vocabulary needs to be evaluated for its effectiveness in teaching vocabulary. Moreover, the researcher investigates the students' responses to the game application in learning vocabulary.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The study proposes two statements of the problem as follows:

1. Is the use of Total Physical Response (TPR) method by using 'Simon Says' game effective in teaching and learning vocabulary to the fourth grade students?
2. What are the students' responses towards the use of 'Simon Says' game in teaching and learning vocabulary?

1.3 Purposes of the Study

1. To investigate whether the use of Total Physical Response (TPR) method of 'Simon Says' game is effective in teaching and learning English vocabulary in the fourth grade.
2. To reveal the students' responses towards the use of 'Simon Says' game in teaching and learning vocabulary.

1.4 Method of the Study

This method is conducted on quasi-experimental research. In this study two classes will be taken as the sample of the research. One class is for the experimental class (4th grade) which learn vocabulary using 'Simon Says' game, and the other one is the control class (3rd grade) which learn vocabulary without using "Simon Says' game treatment.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The findings in this study are expected to give contributions to the English as a Foreign Language (EFL), specifically teaching English vocabulary to young learners. The expected contributions are as follows:

1. Theoretical Benefits

The results of the study are expected to enrich the literature on methods in language teaching and learning, particularly teaching English vocabulary to young learners. Moreover, this study is expected to be a valuable reference for other researchers to conduct further researches in the same field, especially about the strategy in teaching a foreign language to young learners.

2. Practical Benefits

The results of this study are expected to be reference of a good language teaching and learning method that will enable students to learn vocabulary in more enjoyable way as they will learn English vocabulary easily. Furthermore, it is also expected to be useful for readers who are interested in the vocabulary teaching method for young learners.

3. Professional Benefits

The results of this study are expected to provide educators and schools with useful information about the implementation of Total Physical Response (TPR) method in the classroom. Therefore, it is expected to be a reference and guidance for teachers who use this method in teaching vocabulary.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

The main focus of this study is the effectiveness of TPR method of 'Simon Says' game in teaching vocabulary to young learners at a primary school in Bandung and to find out the students' responses towards the use of 'Simon Says' game in the process of teaching and learning vocabulary.

The young learners in this study are the 3rd and the 4th grade elementary students. They are approximately around 8-10 years old who still learn the basic level of English vocabulary and basic level of English proficiency. The vocabulary that the teacher use to teach the students is noun about emotions, animals and parts of body, and also verb from the instructions given by the teacher.

The activity of TPR that is used by the researcher in teaching vocabulary of nouns and instructions to the 3rd and 4th grade students is 'Simon Says' game.

1.7 Organization of the Study

This research paper is divided into five chapter. First, Chapter One is divided into subtopics to elaborate the issues as follows: Background of the Study, Statement of the Problems, Purposes of the Study, Method of the Study, Significance of the Study, Limitations of the Study and Organization of the Study. The next chapter is Chapter Two, which provides a literature review of the issues that are relevant to the study. Chapter Three includes the research design. Chapter Four contains the research findings and discussions. The last chapter is the conclusion of the research and suggestions for further researches.

