

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a brief description of the whole content of the research, including background, statements of the problem, aims of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, hypothesis and organization of paper.

1.1 Background

Vocabulary development is an important aspect of language development and research conducted in recent years has been very exciting (Linse, 2005:122). A variety of studies have proven that appropriate vocabulary instruction benefit language students especially school age learners. According to McKeown and Beck (2003:13-31), both formal and informal vocabulary instructions are important to engage students' cognitive skills and to give opportunities for learners to actually use the words.

Unfortunately, based on the researcher's observation in an elementary school in Bandung and the result of interview with the fifth grade students in that school, it was found that vocabulary was their main problem in learning English. The students said that they felt difficult to memorize the meaning of the words because the teachers never used the media in teaching English especially in presenting vocabulary. They said that they felt bored with the teacher's technique so the material was not interesting.

Vocabulary is an important aspect in teaching language since “words are the basic unit of language because without vocabulary, one cannot communicate effectively or express idea and having a limited vocabulary is also a barrier” (Zhihong, 2000:38). Therefore, to make learning vocabulary easier for students, teachers, as Linse (2005:123) says, should consider principles for teaching vocabulary such as: emphasize both direct and indirect teaching, teach how to use context clues appropriately, present multiple exposures to new vocabulary items and have students keep vocabulary notebooks.

Teacher should facilitate vocabulary learning by teaching learners useful words and using teaching strategies to help learners to figure out meaning on their own. Regarding this, Allen puts forward:

The teaching of English to the beginner should need the strategies to make the English lesson more exciting. The best strategy is using an approach, which still has relation to their world. Teaching vocabulary requires use of all senses to get the best results and the best memory retention possible (Allen, 1983:53).

When young learners learn new words in a foreign language, they also relate their L2 with L1 knowledge to develop their understanding to know the meaning of each word that they learn. It is a teacher’s task to teach vocabulary in context, as Harra (1984:125) states, in teaching and learning process because young learners seem to learn new words quickly and they will also forget them quickly. This, as Thornbury (2004:12) suggests, aims to help teachers in introducing new words to young learners so they can memorize those words for a long time.

Learners need to acquire vocabulary learning strategies in order to discover meaning of new words. Weatherford (1990:125) states that the strategies should be useful within the classroom as well as when learners are in a situation where they encounter new and unfamiliar words on their own.

One of appropriate strategies is using series pictures. It is in line with Gerlach and Emiliy (1980:273) that pictures may not only be worth a thousand miles. Through pictures, learners can be shown people, places and things from areas far outside their own experiences. It is affirmed by Nation (2003:45), who states that picture is a potential source in transferring the information and also it can increase students' sensitivity.

Based on the phenomenon and the reasons above, this study aimed to investigate the effect of the use of series pictures in helping students to learn vocabulary and to find out students' responses toward the use of series pictures in teaching vocabulary.

1.2 Statements of Problem

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of series pictures in helping students' vocabulary enhancement and to find out students' responses toward the use of series pictures. They are guided by answering the questions:

1.1 Can series pictures help students' vocabulary enhancement?

1.2 How are the students' responses toward learning vocabulary through series pictures?

1.3 Aims of the study

Based on the research questions, the purposes of this study are as follows:

1. To investigate the effect of the use of series pictures in helping students' vocabulary enhancement
2. To investigate students' responses toward learning vocabulary using series pictures

1.4 Scope of the study

This study is concerned with the use of series pictures in teaching vocabulary to fifth graders in an elementary school. This study specifically investigates the improvement of students' vocabulary mastery through series pictures and their responses toward the use of series pictures in classroom teaching.

1.5 The significance of the study

There are two significance outcomes expected from the study namely theoretical and practical benefit as follows:

1. Theoretical significance

The result of the research is expected to enrich the literature on the English teaching strategy and also give beneficial reference for further research on the use of series pictures in teaching vocabulary to young learners.

2. Practical significance

a. For the teachers

For the teacher, the result of the research is expected to give some benefits for the teachers in term of practical matters on the use of series pictures in teaching vocabulary to young learners by considering the students' need and characteristics.

b. For the students

Through this research, the students are expected to be able to:

- (1) improve their vocabulary mastery,
- (2) be motivated to learn English,
- (3) be more active to involve themselves into the learning process, and
- (4) get long term memory of vocabulary learning.

c. For the management of school (principal/policy makers)

The result of the research is expected to lead to a policy in providing the appropriate facilities to create a conducive teaching and learning process.

1.6 Hypothesis

According to Hatch and Farhady (1992), hypothesis means a tentative statement about the outcome of the research. Commonly, in experimental studies, the most common hypothesis used is null hypothesis that states an exact opposite of what the research wants to demonstrate to be true. So in this research the null hypothesis used is as following:

$$H_0 : \mu_1 = \mu_2$$

H₀: There is no difference in mean adjustment level of test scores between students who are taught about vocabulary by using series pictures with those who are not.

1.7 Organization of Paper

This research paper is divided into five chapters. Those are:

Chapter I Introduction

This chapter consists of an introduction which provides the information on the background of the study, the scope of the study, statement of the problem significance of the study, research methodology, and organization of the paper.

Chapter II Theoretical foundation

This chapter focuses on the theoretical foundations that are relevant to the present study, with teaching vocabulary through series pictures as the main issue.

Chapter III Research Method

This chapter comprises the methodology of the research such as; research design including variables and hypothesis, data collection including participants and instruments, research procedure and data analysis.

Chapter IV Data Presentation and Discussion

This chapter provides the results of the research and discussion of the research findings.

Chapter V Conclusion and Suggestion

This chapter presents all the conclusion of the study and also provides for implications and suggestions for further researchers and related institutions.