

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Language is one way to communicate with other people in our daily activity. To communicate well with each other, we have to try to learn the language first. When learning a language, we cannot separate it from the vocabulary learning of the language itself. If we learn a certain language, such as English, we also learn about the vocabulary.

Actually, vocabulary plays an important role in learning language, not only for learning English as foreign language but also for all languages even Indonesian language. Huyen and Nga (2003; as cited by Paridawati, 2007) state that vocabulary is a linking element among language skills (reading, listening, writing and speaking) when we learn certain language, for example English. So, it is very important for students to acquire more English words in their learning language process. Thus, they can communicate by using English well.

The next issue which appears in learning vocabulary is how to make the students able to memorize the words well, so they can use the words in appropriate context in the future. Learning English vocabulary is not as easy as learning vocabulary of native language because students can only find English in their school. Moreover, it is not used in their daily life. Therefore,

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as a teacher, we have to introduce English vocabulary earlier to our students, especially, to children. As Marcos (2004) states that introducing vocabulary is better to be given earlier to the children. So, they can get greater chances to have good proficiency in English and also they can memorize the words and then retrieve them later on in appropriate context because the children have been familiar with the words.

Considering English vocabulary learning is a new thing in children learning experience, teachers should be more creative in teaching vocabulary in the classroom. Besides, if the teachers want to be successful in teaching a foreign language to children, they need to have specific skills and good intuition to teach them. They also should provide a certain time for the children to learn vocabulary in the classroom. It is not an easy job for the teachers. They have to choose appropriate approach and method wisely to teach vocabulary in the classroom, in order to suit the students' needs (Brown, 2001).

To give an alternative way in teaching new vocabulary to the children, Nation (1990:51; as cited by Cameron, 2001) offers gesture usage as basic technique which can be used in the young learner classroom to help them memorize the vocabulary. Cameron (2001) also states that gesture can help students in making strong memory connections. By introducing a new word which is explained by gesture, the students have built memory activities and then the word is stored automatically into the students' short term memory. Because there is a memory activity during vocabulary

learning, the memorized words stay active and they are ready to be used in the future.

It is also parallel to Goldin-Meadow's statement (2001) that gesture could give more chances for memorizing some new words. She argues that when the students have memory activities in their brain, the teacher should help them to recognize the meanings of new English words that have been stored before. To recognize the words easily and then the students can remember them in long-term memory, the teachers should reduce some 'cognitive loads' in learning vocabulary process. "Cognitive load" means that there is much information that should be processed and memorized in our brain but our brain has a limit on ability of working memory (Brunken et al, 2002). The more words we memorize, the harder our brain will work with the words. Then, we will have greater opportunity to decay the words that are stored before. Thus, we have to reduce these "cognitive loads" as possible as we can.

To reduce the "cognitive load" in our brain, the teachers should make an interesting and fun classroom situation during teaching vocabulary process. Gesture offers more chances to help students to get involved into interesting and fun learning in the classroom because the teacher visualizes the words meaning through their body movements (Goldin-Meadow, 2001). In line with Goldin-Meadow, Suharnan (2005) in his book, *Psikologi Kognitif*, states that visual imagery is an effective way in memorizing something such as words. Someone can memorize words longer than the

others when he / she visualizes the words either in concrete objects such as through pictures, videos, and gestures, or in abstract objects such as when someone imagines a cow in his / her brain when he / she hears “cow” word. By using gestures in the classroom, teachers can give students meaningful experience learning because teacher includes them in learning activities and then students should think and find the words meaning themselves. Besides, the teacher can also let students create their own gesture based on their imagination in finding new words meaning. The more students think about the words, the more they can memorize and understand them easily.

Based on the issue above, the researcher is triggered to do this study in which to find out how effective the gesture is in improving students' words memory to master English vocabularies. This study is also conducted to know difficulties that are encountered by the students when their teacher uses gesture to explain vocabularies.

1.2. Research Questions

The study is focused on the following questions.

1. What types of gestures are used by the teacher in explaining new vocabulary in young learners' classroom?
2. How are gestures realized by the teacher when explaining new vocabulary in young learners' classroom?
3. Why does the teacher use gestures in explaining new vocabulary in young learners' classroom?

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4. What difficulties do students encounter during learning vocabularies taught by using gesture?

1.3. Aims of the Research

The objectives of the study are to find out the types of gestures that are used by a young learner teacher and some reasons why teacher uses gestures in the classroom when explaining new vocabulary to the student. This study is also conducted to know how gestures are realized by the teacher when she/he explains the vocabulary in the classroom and to get information about difficulties that are encountered by students when their teacher uses gesture to explain certain vocabulary or even when they use gesture to find words meaning.

1.4. Significance of the Research

The research is expected to give good impact both for researcher and all respondents who were involved in this study. The researcher may get descriptions of the types of gestures used by the teacher and the reason why gestures are used. Besides, the researcher also get the description of how the teacher realizes gestures when explaining some vocabularies. Because this study involved students to find the obstacles that might be encountered during using gesture in learning vocabularies, so that, the researcher can

give some suggestions to make better vocabulary teaching techniques for young learner.

In addition, English teachers who read the research may choose gestures usage as an alternative way to teach vocabularies for children. Moreover, gestures should be the simplest teaching aid that can be used by every teacher at school. Besides, for the next research in the future, this research could be a first step to conduct better research about other new teaching strategies for vocabulary.

1.5. Research Method

1.5.1. Research Design

Qualitative approach is used in this study. This approach is used because it concerns with human behavior. Furthermore, there is some detailed information that can be explored from the participants about the phenomenon of the study. Qualitative approach also focuses on process rather than product (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982; as cited by Fraenkel and Wallen, 1990).

1.5.2. Participants

This study involved a young learner teacher of an English course in Bandung. The reason of the selection of the participant and site is that the teacher claimed to use body movements and expressions to explain a certain word to the students. Based on Levine's and

Adelman's statement, body movements and expressions can be included as gestures (Levine and Adelman, 1993).

The teacher was involved voluntarily. She has been teaching Junior Level for about two and a half years. Besides, she also teaches Adult Level in the same place. She graduated from English Education program of a public school in Bandung.

1.5.3. Data Collection

In collecting data, classroom observation and interview were used as instruments. The observation was conducted to teacher who teaches in Junior Level. The observation covered all gestures used by the teacher during teaching learning vocabulary process. During observing the teacher, tally sheets were also used to complete the description of types of gesture.

The second instrument is interview. Interview was done after observing the classroom situation. It was done to get more information that has not been gained during the observation. Besides, through interviews, the questions can be explained clearly and also paraphrased if the interviewees can not understand the questions. Clarification and follow-up questions are possible to be asked in this session.

1.5.4. Research Procedures

There are some steps that are conducted to collect data. The first step is conducting classroom observation to the teacher who teaches Junior Level students. The aspects that are going to be observed are all gestures emerged during teaching learning process. The result from the observation is divided into groups and then categorized into types of gestures.

Second, interviews are held to teacher and students. The data that are gained from the teacher are to answer the first and third research question. Meanwhile, to answer the fourth research question, interview is held to the students. The questions asked are in open-ended question form. So that, interviewee can express the idea that she/he wants to express. The data gained from the interview session are then transcribed and categorized based on definition of the situation, perspectives, strategies and methods (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; as cited by Alwasilah, 2008: 230). Furthermore, the result of transcribed and categorized interview is related to the appropriate literature and presented in descriptive form.

The next step is cross-checking the result of classroom observation and interview session. This step is aimed to get clear confirmation of each gained data. Furthermore, comparing and

contrasting the result are conducted with the relevant literature. The last step is making conclusion from all gained data.

1.5.5. Data Analysis

After collecting data from the observation and interview, the data are analyzed and presented in a form of descriptive explanation. The collected data from those instruments are cross-checked by using descriptive qualitative analysis by Miles and Huberman (1984, as cited in Sugiyono, 2009:338). Miles and Huberman explain that there are three concurrent flows of activity in qualitative data analysis: (1) data reduction; (2) data display; (3) drawing conclusion.

1.5.5.1. Observation

In doing observation, videos recorded are used to know natural classroom situation during teaching learning process using gestures. The videos recorded are also used to support observation sheets and observer's note. Furthermore, the data are transcribed and then categorized based on the McAllen's theory about gestures usage in classroom context.

1.5.5.2. Interview

The interview session is held after observing the classroom situation. The gained data through interview are collected from teacher and students. The interviewer asks some open-ended questions by using native language (Indonesian) and voice-recorder is also used to make

the analysis process easier. Later on, the data are transcribed and then interpreted into some issues based on the research questions. Finally, the data are related to some proper literature.

1.6. Organization of the Paper

To make readers understand the content of the paper, this paper is organized into 5 chapters as follows.

Chapter I is Introduction which contains background, research questions, objective of the research, scope of the research, significance of research, research method, clarification of terms and organization of the paper.

Chapter II contains Theoretical Foundations taken from several different theories. The theories used are McNeill's gestures theory (1992) and Tellier's theory about the role of gestures in the classroom.

Chapter III presents Research Methodology included methodology of the research, the research design, the instruments, population and sample, and technique in collecting and analyzing data.

Chapter IV is Result and Discussion that reports the research finding.

Chapter V is Conclusion and Suggestion which consists of the conclusion and the suggestion of the study.