

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the introduction of this study. It contains the background of the study, research questions, aims of the study, scope of the study, and significance of the study. This chapter also provides a brief concept concerning research methodology employed in this study that consists of data collection and data analysis. Finally, this chapter is completed with the clarification of terms and organization of the paper that present a general description of each chapter's content.

### **1.1 Background**

According to the policy of the Ministry of Education and Culture No. 060/V/1993, English is taught to elementary school students as a local content. Hence, most elementary schools in Indonesia consider the necessity to include English as one of local subjects taught at school. Yet in fact, English is a new language for students since they do not use English to communicate on their daily life. Therefore, students find it difficult to acquire English and to achieve the communicative function through it.

In order to achieve the communicative function through English, there are four language skills that should be mastered. Those are reading, writing, listening, and speaking which are considered as crucial things to be grasped in both classroom context and extracurricular environment (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). In

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helping students to achieve the success in those four language skills, children need to master adequate vocabulary as one of the language components to enable them to acquire English as the foreign language. That statement is in line with Harmer (1991 cited in Cameron, 2001) who says that vocabulary plays a vital part in acquiring English. The statements prove that vocabulary plays the central component in learning a target language, and the absence of which often obstructs the conveyance of the meaning completely.

Teaching English, especially introducing vocabulary for young learners may be different and more challenging than that for adults, particularly due to different characteristics between them. Children tend to be very excited to learn something new, including learning English, making them better learners than adults. Fisher (1977:26) states that children are active learners; however, they still need chances to move about and become actively involved in the learning process. Furthermore, it should be taken into teachers' account that children will feel bored easily, they tend to find another interesting activity and lose their interest very quickly if the material and method are not interesting for them. Therefore, introducing new vocabularies to young learners requires interesting and enjoyable activities in order to be more fun and effective.

Unfortunately, the vocabulary teaching methods used in most schools in Indonesia are still irrelevant to children's needs and characteristics. Teachers usually employ the fastest and the simplest methods to teach vocabulary, for example memorizing strategy, in which students are asked to find the synonyms or the antonyms of the words and they have to memorize them all. Another way

that most teachers usually use to teach vocabulary is by using conventional method, or some people label it as translation method or direct method. Brown (2001) notes that one of the characters in translation method is introducing new words in mother tongue with little use of the target language. Consequently, the method does not give students a chance to explore the meaning of the words by themselves and it is not yet successful in improving students' language proficiency as well. Additionally, this method will not attract students' attention because it seems monotonous.

One of the methods which is considered good to help children learn vocabulary in a fun way is storytelling. It provides children with excitement, motivates, interests them unintentionally, and allows an incidental vocabulary acquisition (Cameron, 2001). It is also believed that the finding and integration of the information about letters, words, and sentence can be driven more automatically by listening to a story many times.

A fun and enjoyable method that applies storytelling in teaching vocabulary is Total Physical Response Storytelling (TPRS). It was developed for the first time by Blaine Ray, a Spanish teacher in Bakersfield, as the extension of James Asher's Total Physical Response (TPR) method. TPRS is considered as a fun way to teach vocabulary since a teacher teaches vocabulary to students through a story and repeated commands in order to have students to respond to it physically. James Asher would suggest (cited in Brown, 2001:30) TPR and TPRS method as a stress-free language teaching method, therefore students would not feel overly self-conscious and defensive. Furthermore, Lasern-Freeman

(2000:113) states that TPRS has been developed in order to motivate students to study foreign languages and thereby encourages them to persist in their study beyond a beginning level proficiency.

Based on the consideration above, this study will focus mainly on the implementation of TPRS in teaching vocabulary to young learners in one of the elementary schools in Cianjur. This study aims at investigating how the teacher applies TPRS to teach vocabulary. Moreover, this study will also investigate the students' responses towards the implementation of TPRS method in learning vocabulary.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

This study proposes two research questions as follows:

1. How does the teacher apply the Total Physical Response Storytelling (TPRS) method in teaching vocabulary to young learners?
2. What are the students' responses towards the implementation of Total Physical Response Storytelling (TPRS) method in learning vocabulary?

## **1.3 Aims of the Study**

Related to the research questions, this study aims at:

1. Investigating how the teacher applies the Total Physical Response Storytelling (TPRS) method in teaching vocabulary to young learners.
2. Investigating the students' responses towards the implementation of the Total Physical Response Storytelling (TPRS) method in learning vocabulary.

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#### 1.4 Scope of the Study

The main focus of this study is the implementation of TPRS method in teaching vocabulary to young learners. In this case, the implementation refers to how the teacher applies the TPRS method in teaching vocabulary. Young learners in this study are 4th grade elementary students around 9-11 years old who still learn the basic level of vocabulary and basic level of English proficiency. Furthermore, another concern of this study is to find out the students' responses towards the implementation of the method in learning vocabulary.

#### 1.5 Significance of Study

The findings of this study are expected to give significant contributions and to be valuable input for EFL language teaching and learning process, especially in teaching it to young learners. The expected contributions are as follows:

##### 1. *Theoretical Benefit*

The results of the study are expected to enrich the literature on methods in language teaching and learning, particularly for young learners. In addition, this study is expected to be one of the valuable references for other researchers to conduct further research in the same field especially about the strategy in language teaching and learning for young learners.

##### 2. *Practical Benefits*

For practical benefits, the results of this study are expected to be the reference of a good language teaching and learning method that can enable students to learn



vocabulary more enjoyable as they will better master vocabulary easily. It is also expected to give valuable reference and input concerning the use of TPRS, especially the steps in implementing the method for English teachers to teach vocabulary to young learners. Furthermore, it is also expected useful for the 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 the beneficial information about the implementation of Total Physical Response Storytelling method in the classroom. Therefore, it is expected to be the reference and guidance for teachers use the method in teaching vocabulary.

## **1.6 Research Methodology**

This study aims to describe how the English teacher in one elementary school in Cianjur applies TPRS method in teaching vocabulary and also to find out students' responses to the implementation of the method. Therefore, descriptive qualitative was used as a research design in analyzing the data of this study. The participants involved in this study were the English teacher and her 4th grade students.

The data collected in this study were obtained from interview addressed to the teacher and classroom observation that included video recording, field notes, and observation sheets. In order to answer the first research question about the steps of TPRS method applied by the teacher, the data gathered from classroom observation were transcribed, analyzed, then classified into selected categories based on the stages in implementing TPRS method. Next, data from interview

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were transcribed and analyzed to confirm and complete the results gained from the classroom observation and documents.

Meanwhile, to answer the second research question considering to students' responses towards the implementation of TPRS method, the number of students who responded and did not respond the instructions in each word, step, and meeting were calculated. Then, the percentage numbers of students who responded in each word, step, and meeting were then analyzed to find an increasing number of students who responded to the instructions. It aimed at finding out how the method is able to motivate students to learn.

The further step was obtaining the average of percentage of students who responded in each word, step, and meeting compared to the duration of each meeting in order to see students' attention span while dealing with the lesson.

### **1.7 Clarification of Terms**

To avoid misinterpretation in understanding this study, several important terms are clarified as follows:

- 1. Total Physical Response Storytelling (TPRS)** is regarded as a language teaching method which is developed first time by Blaine Ray. This method is the extension of the TPR method by James. J .Asher. This teaching method uses commands from teacher to students through storytelling, in order to make students respond to it by using physical movement.

2. **Vocabulary:** Based on Oxford Learners Dictionary, vocabulary defined as all words in a language that person know and use. This study only covers the basic level of vocabulary since this study involves elementary students.
3. **Young Learners:** Young learners are children around 4-12 years old (Wright, 1995). In this study, the subject is elementary school students around 9-11 years old.
4. **Students' Responses** in this study refers to the physical action that the students do in responding the teacher's instructions.

## **1.8 Organization of Paper**

### **Chapter I - Introduction**

This chapter contains a brief explanation about the background of study, statement of problems, aims of the study, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, a brief of research methodology, clarification of terms, and organization of the paper.

### **Chapter II – Literature Review**

This chapter presents the concept and theories related to this study. They cover the theory of teaching English to young learners, the characteristics of young learners, definition of vocabulary, the importance of teaching vocabulary, the theory of storytelling, and the theory of Total Physical Response Storytelling (TPRS) method.



### **Chapter III- Research Methodology**

This chapter provides the procedure of the study to answer the research questions.

This chapter also presents further explanations of research methodology which consists of research design employed, research instruments, procedure in collecting data, and analysis of the data.

### **Chapter IV- Findings and Discussion**

This chapter mainly elaborates the results and interpretations of the research findings. This part covers the data collected, data analysis, and the interpretation of findings from the study.

### **Chapter V- Conclusion and Suggestion**

In this chapter provides the conclusion and recommendation of this study. This chapter also presents the recommendations as contribution for English teaching and learning, and also for the further research on the same field.