

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains general outlines of the research. It provides background of the research, research questions, purposes of the research, significance of the research, research methodology, clarification of terms and organization of the paper.

A. Background of the research

Teachers can use themselves as a teaching aid. Harmer (2001, p. 64) explains teachers are pieces of teaching equipment in their own right. Therefore, they can use themselves to support the teaching process verbally or nonverbally. Related to teachers' nonverbal communication, he adds one way that teachers can do on the spot is by using gestures, mimes, and expressions, to convey meaning and atmosphere. Mimes can be telling a story without speaking while expressions are related to how to show feeling. However, gestures are conscious movements which describe a richer meaning than what can be given by speech alone. Gestures and speech are partnered in discourse construction. It is supported by McNeill (1992) who is the first to argue that gestures and speech make up a single, integrated system of meaning expression.

Regarding the interaction of gestures and speech, they work together to communicate certain ideas. McNeill (1992, p. 218) states that "... gestures and speech are closely linked in meaning, function, and time; they share meanings, roles, and a common fate". They both refer to the same ideas. Gestures are imagistic, speech is linguistic, and they interact. As a result of this interaction, gestures often occur during speech. The truth is that the spoken components and gestural components of speakers interact with one another to create a precise and vivid understanding. Gestures do not always accompany speech, but gestures occur when discontinuity exist (Kendon, 2004, p. 174 as cited in Hudson, 2011). Because of this relationship, speakers can manipulate their speech and gestures according to occasion as they construct their discourses.

Gestures are important in human life, especially to be used in teaching and learning process. In the discussion of gestures, Darwish and Region (2007) state the use of gestures plays an essential role in the classroom. In addition, Elfatihi (2005) says that gesture can be used in presenting language item, providing feedback, and managing classroom. Teachers are responsible to manage classroom activities so that by using gestures they can create supporting conditions for learning. Furthermore, using gestures in managing classroom activity becomes so important to help students understand the material, with the intention that they can achieve the expected learning objectives and positive educational outcomes (Oliver & Reschly, 2007, p. 1).

In relation to students' understanding, Alibali and Nathan (2005) affirm that gestures are particularly important in classroom settings because students' comprehension is often challenged by instructional discourse that presents new concepts and uses unfamiliar terms, especially in teaching English to young learners. Students require more than a lot of explanations and words to link their mind with real world and physical referents such as objects, actions, diagrams, or other inscriptions. Gestures are not the main elements in teaching and learning even they are determined as adjunct. However, they take part in improving students' comprehension particularly when the verbal message transferred by teachers is ambiguous (Thompson & Massaro, 1994 as cited in Alibali & Nathan, 2005), and more complex (McNeill, 1992 as cited in Hudson, 2011).

The significance of gesture used by teachers in teaching language to young learners is supported by Tellier's research finding in 2008. His study was purposed to see the impact of using gesture on students' memorization of words in their first language. He involved 42 French children from the same school who were divided into 3 groups of 14 children for the purpose of the experiment: control, comparison, and experimental groups. After that, the words were heard on a video and illustrated by gestures. Some of the children just had to look at the gestures and repeat the words heard, others had also to reproduce the gestures they saw. The results show

children in the experimental group who had reproduced the gestures could memorize better than those who only saw the gestures as well as those who saw the video without gestures. These results show that gestures can have an impact on words' memorization especially for children.

Another study about gestures in foreign language classroom was conducted by Taleghani-Nikazm in 2008. Her research was aimed to examine gestures used by instructors in an American University. She observed teacher-student interaction in six hours of elementary German language classes and four hours of intermediate Persian language classes. A total of four instructors were recorded. Instructors for both German and Persian were native speakers. The gestures used and performed by the instructors were marked and transcribed by using a transcription convention developed by Jefferson (1984 as cited in Taleghani-Nikazm, 2008) for research in conversation analysis. Based on the analysis, the instructors performed and used gesture as an explicit pedagogical tool in the service of facilitating comprehension of unknown vocabulary, eliciting vocabulary from the learners and providing learners with visual cues to corrective feedback. Taleghani-Nikazm (2008) concluded that teachers' gestures are a fundamental aspect of teachers' pedagogical repertoire that must be taken into account when examining teacher-student interaction. These results show that gestures are important in teaching and learning process especially in teaching language in foreign classroom.

Considering the importance of gestures in the classroom, the research was aimed to find out the types of gestures mostly used by a teacher in one elementary school in Bandung, in what situations she mostly used her gestures and for what purposes she used her gesture in teaching English to young learners.

B. Research Questions

The following are questions to be addressed in this research.

1. What types of gestures are mostly used by the teacher in teaching English to young learners?
2. In what situations does the teacher mostly use gestures in teaching English to young learners?
3. For what purposes does the teacher mostly use gestures in teaching English to young learners?

C. Purposes of the Research

The purposes of the research are as follows:

1. To find out the types of gestures mostly used by the teacher in teaching English to young learners.
2. To find out in what situations the gestures are mostly used in teaching English to young learners.
3. To find out for what purposes the gestures are mostly used in teaching English for young learners.

D. Significance of the Research

This research is the first step to study gestures as the part of teaching and learning process. The study of gestures in the classroom may be significant because it is tightly related to teacher and students' talk. These kinds of talk influence the teacher-students interaction while gestures influence the flow of communication in the classroom. For that reason, the study of gesture can be used to improve students-teacher interaction in the classroom. Because of the study of gestures is rarely conducted, this research is expected to be the inspiration for others to gain more

knowledge about the use of gesture in English teaching and learning especially to young learners.

In addition, English teachers who read this research may better understand how to use gestures and optimize their use to help their students achieve the goal of language education. By considering this research, teachers may have valuable and beneficial information about gestures that can be applied in the classroom. Actually, gestures could be the simplest teaching support that can be used by every teacher at school. Teachers can use them even modify them to facilitate good language learning.

E. Clarification of Terms

To clear the misconception and misunderstanding, several terms are clarified as follows:

1. *Gesture* refers to a name for visible, deliberate, and conscious action when it is used as an utterance or as a part of an utterance (Kendon, 2004).
2. *Utterance* is related to any ensemble of actions that counts for others as an attempt by the actor to 'give' information of some sort (Kendon, 2004).
3. *Young learners* are learners who study English in elementary school aging between 7-12 years old.
4. *Situations of using gestures* are related to the conditions in which gestures exist at a particular time in a teaching process.
5. *Purposes of using gestures* refer to the aims of using gestures in language teaching.

F. Organization of The Paper

This paper will be presented into five chapters as follows:

Chapter I : Introduction

This chapter contains background of the research, research questions, purposes of research, significance of the research, clarification of terms, and organization of the paper.

Chapter II : Theoretical Foundations

This chapter contains theoretical foundations taken from several different theories. In details, they are the characteristics of young learners, concept of gestures, the use of gesture in teaching, and the use of gesture in teaching English to young learners.

Chapter III : Research Method

This chapter describes the procedures of the research to answer the three questions stated earlier in Chapter I. This chapter covers the statements of the problems, research design, the site and participants, the data collection, and the data analysis.

Chapter IV : Findings and Discussion

This chapter will present and elaborate the result of the study. The data will be categorized, analyzed, and discussed by using some relevant theories related to gesture in teaching English to young learners.

Chapter V : Conclusions and Suggestions

This chapter will provide the conclusion of the study and some suggestions from the writer for further study.