CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a brief description of the whole content of the research. The chapter comprises research background, scope of the research, research questions, aims of the research, significance of the research, research methodology, and organization of the paper.

1.1   Research Background

The first thing a language learner would recognize on a language is the words since languages emerge first as words, regarding to the way we learn our first and any subsequent languages (Thornbury, 2002). In acquiring a language, words or vocabulary, as one of the knowledge areas in language, plays a great role for learners. Rivers (1983, as cited in Nunan, 1991) asserts that the acquisition of an adequate vocabulary is very important for successful language use because without rich vocabulary a learner cannot use the structures and functions learned for comprehensible communication.

For children who are learning a second or foreign language, words have a great value. Cameron (2001) argues that words are important to develop children's skill and knowledge; and building up useful words to young learners is fundamental to the foreign language learning at primary level. Linse (2005) also states that young learners' vocabulary development is an important aspect of their

language development. Therefore, it is crucial for language learners, especially young learners, to learn vocabulary.

However, young EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners have lack amount and type of exposures to English. Their experience of the language outside the classroom is very little (Cameron, 2001). Paul (2002) asserts that children in Asian countries have limited exposure to English in their daily lives. Their mother languages and English have very little in common. In Indonesia, Cahyono and Widiati (2008) report Nurweni's (1997) research, revealing that Indonesian learners' EFL vocabulary size was in small number, far less than 50% of the target words. Also, Musthafa (2008) mentions one challenge in teaching young learners in Indonesia, that is lack of demonstration in and exposure to functional use of English.

Regarding the way learners acquire vocabulary, there are two approaches. Learners acquire vocabulary through: 1) implicit or indirect learning; and 2) explicit learning or direct or planned vocabulary instructions (Schmitt, 2000; Seal, 1991 as cited in Takač, 2008). Most of EFL learners, concerning the issue of English limited exposures, will be very dependent on the later. In direct vocabulary learning, teachers' role is very crucial to teach new vocabulary to the learners. Teachers should make learners know new words in English, how to say, write, and understand about them (Munoz & Forero, 2011). Also, Cameron (2001) points out that it is teachers' responsibility to give students as much exposure as possible to English as foreign language and also to provide them with opportunities for learning through activities in the classroom.

Actually, direct vocabulary instruction is not only appropriate for young learners who have limited exposures to target language. It is also effective for young learners in general. Young learners "learn more words and more about those words when the teaching is explicit" (Johnson & Yeates, 2006, as cited in Spencer, Goldstein & Kaminski, 2012, p. 19). Allen (2006) has five reasons why teachers need to carry out explicit vocabulary instruction: (1) it increases comprehension in reading; (2) it expands knowledge of new concepts; (3) it extends range and specificity in writing; (4) it helps learners to communicate more effectively; and (5) it helps learners to understand words and concepts that they were incompletely aware of.

Conducting explicit vocabulary teaching to young learners requires teachers to consider and use some appropriate techniques in presenting the vocabulary in the classroom. Choyimah (2011) cited Brown (2001) suggests that teachers should find better techniques to teach language components, including vocabulary. The range of techniques in teaching vocabulary is wide. Nation (1990, as cited in Cameron, 2001) writes the basic techniques of vocabulary presentation which can be applied in young learner classroom: by *demonstration* (such as using objects, using a cut-out figure, using pictures, using gestures, and performing an action); and by *verbal explanation* (analytical definition, putting new word in a defining context, and translating into first language). Techniques employed by teachers in the classroom depend on some factors when the teacher introduces vocabulary. The factors considered are the content, time availability,

and its value for the learners (Takač, 2008). This makes teachers have some certain reasons in employing a certain technique in presenting vocabulary.

In accordance with the issue, this study aimed at investigating the techniques employed by teacher in teaching vocabulary to young learners. The result of this research is expected to give portrayals of the techniques applied by an English teacher in young learner classroom when presenting meaning and form of vocabulary, and to provide related information about the reasons why the teacher uses a particular technique when presenting vocabulary to the learners.

1.2 Scope of the Research

This research focuses on identifying the techniques employed in young EFL learner classroom in presenting the meaning and the form of English vocabulary by a teacher of EYL (English for Young Learners) course. In addition, this study is also directed to investigate the teacher's reasons in employing those techniques.

1.3 Research Questions

The main purpose of the study is to find out the techniques in presenting the meaning and the form of vocabulary, and the reason in employing the techniques. They are guided by answering the following questions:

1. What techniques are employed by the teacher in presenting the meaning of vocabulary to the learners?

2. What techniques are employed by the teacher in presenting the form of vocabulary to the learners?

3. What are the reasons in employing those techniques?

1.4 Aims of the Research

In accordance with the research questions, the aims of conducting this research are:

1. To find out the techniques employed by the teacher in presenting the meaning of vocabulary to the learners.

2. To find out the techniques employed by the teacher in presenting the form of vocabulary to the learners.

3. To find out the reasons in employing those techniques.

1.5 Significance of the Research

This study is expected to show the present condition that happens in vocabulary teaching practices to young learners in the classroom. The result of this study will give some benefits by contributing to the field of teaching, as it enriches the literature about teaching techniques, particularly techniques in presenting vocabulary to young learners. It reveals the techniques in presenting vocabulary meaning, in presenting vocabulary form, as well as the reasons in applying the techniques.

Furthermore, the study is also expected to provide useful information about implementing the techniques which later is expected to be professional

source for other young learner teachers in selecting appropriate techniques for their learners in presenting vocabulary meaning and form, so the teachers are able to improve and enhance their teaching practices and provide better way in helping the learners learn.

1.6 Research Methodology

1.6.1 Research Design

In this study, researcher employed a qualitative approach with case study design to provide information as the result of observing the phenomenon, since its aim is to "portray 'what it is like' to be in a particular situation, to catch the close up reality and 'thick description" (Geertz, 1973b, as cited in Cohen, Manion & Morisson, 2007, p. 254). This study was conducted to obtain factual information and deep understanding about the phenomenon which according to Sherman and Webb (2005) would lead to new insight. The phenomenon happened naturally, which in this research was related to the teacher's techniques in presenting English vocabulary to young learners in the English course classroom.

1.6.2 Site and Respondent

The research took place in EYL Course in Balai Bahasa UPI, Bandung. The respondent of the research was one of the teachers who taught two classes in the course. The classes consisted of young EFL learners with the age range 9 - 14 years.

1.6.3 Data Collection

In collecting the data, the researcher employed triangulation method, in which multiple instruments were assigned in the study. Triangulation was used to reduce the possibility of bias appeared in one method and to help in making the description more comprehensive (Alwasilah, 2000).

There were two instruments employed in this study. The first instrument was observation, where the researcher was non-participant observer. During the observations, the lessons were video recorded. Observation was conducted to see the teacher's performances in implementing the techniques in the classroom. The researcher recorded the learning activities first, wrote some field notes, and then transcribed the recording to be analyzed in the next step.

The second was interview. Interview was employed by the researcher to complete the data gained from observation. The form of the interview guide was open-ended questions and less structured, where the purpose is to find out the perspectives of the respondent (Patton, 1980, as cited in Merriam, 1988) about some issues. In the interview, the issues are related to the techniques, especially the teacher's reasons in employing the techniques.

1.6.4 Data Analysis

Since the study was conducted through qualitative approach, the data collection and analysis were simultaneously employed. After having the data from the video recordings and interview, the researcher analyzed the data by employing the following steps adopted from Dornyei (2007).

1. Transcribing the data

The recordings gained from the observation and interview were transcribed to know the data thoroughly about the presenting vocabulary techniques, and the reasons in employing those techniques. The researcher tried to retell all the data into a textual form.

2. Pre-coding and coding

After transcribing all the data, the researcher did pre-coding, that was reading through all the texts, reflecting on them, and noting down some thoughts. The process of coding then is highlighting the texts and giving it label so, the researcher can easily identify, retrieve and group the data. The coding process of finding the teaching vocabulary techniques was based on Takač (2008).

3. Growing ideas

To develop the main theme of the study, researcher tried to grow ideas by preparing memos, interview profile, and data display. From this, the researcher was helped in answering the research questions, discovered the phenomena of the presenting vocabulary techniques, and the reasons in employing the techniques from the data coded.

4. Interpreting the data and drawing conclusions

Next, the researcher interpreted the data based on the research questions formulated. The findings and discussions of the data were presented to illustrate the objective of the study. In the end, conclusions were drawn, and the researcher also gave some suggestions for the future.

1.7 Organization of the Paper

This research is organized into five chapters as follows.

1. Chapter I: Introduction

    This chapter contains introduction which presents the information on the background of the study, scope of the research, research questions, aims of the research, significance of the research, research methodology, and also organization of the paper.

2. Chapter II: Theoretical Foundation

    This chapter discusses the concept and definitions which functions as the theoretical foundation of this study for investigating the research problems.

3. Chapter III: Methodology

    This chapter describes the methodology applied to conduct the study including formulation of problem, research design, site and participant, data collection procedures, data analysis, and clarification of terms.

4. Chapter IV: Findings and Discussion

    This chapter reports the result of the research and discussion of the research findings by analyzing the data collected.

5. Chapter V: Conclusions and Suggestions

    This chapter draws conclusions from the findings and discussion, and offers some suggestions to teachers and other researchers who plan to develop the research.