

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

English is learned in Indonesia as the first foreign language. Since English plays an important role in an international communication, mastering English either written or spoken is absolutely needed, especially for Indonesia as a developing country. Besides, it is useful to follow the globalization era to become a modern nation. Thus, English is taught formally in high school as a compulsory subject, even now the elementary schools have begun to introduce English in their curriculum. As it is written in the *GBPP* 1998 that English is not obligatory in Elementary school, but it is organized as a local content. This means that children will be introduced to the foreign language early.

There are four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. The four skills are closely interdependent. The beginning steps in learning language that have to be conducted by learners are being able to know the words, to understand the meaning, and to use them in communication. Moreover, in the early stages of learning a language, one is better introduced to vocabulary than grammar. Without an extensive vocabulary, the students will be unable to use the structure and function they may have learned for comprehensible communication. Thus, in learning English, students have to learn vocabulary first in order to master English.

Vocabulary is central of language teaching and learning. It means that by mastering the vocabulary, of course with grammar, the learners will produce so many sentences easily either in spoken or written one. Then, they can communicate with other people fluently and express their opinion or ideas conveniently.

Mastering vocabulary is important for learners since vocabulary knowledge, as one of the basic component, plays an important role in the four language skills. It gives contribution to learners to perform their skills better. It is impossible for the students to perform their English appropriately, if their vocabulary is very poor. In short, by having too limited vocabulary, the students find it difficult to master language skills, since a good store of words is crucial for understanding and communicating. Therefore, vocabulary mastery must be on the first priority in English language teaching.

Teaching English to the students of Elementary School is presenting vocabulary since they meet English for the first time. The students are introduced with simple things around them, which are familiar to them. Meanwhile, curriculum of elementary education also contains a number of vocabularies to learn besides expressions and simple sentences about things around the children, family, school, geography, and their communication to the environment.

The problems that most of the students encounter are their inadequate vocabularies and their low motivation in joining teaching – learning process. There are some indications which show the weaknesses of students' vocabulary. For example: first, in reading activity, students may sometimes stop to read and pronounce the English sentences or words because they have difficulty to read them correctly. Second, in speaking activity, they find difficulty to express their ideas orally because they lack of vocabulary, even though it is a simple thing. Third, the students' English achievements tests result are still low.

Both the government and teachers have made a lot of efforts concerning with teaching development. Nowadays, the government revised English syllabus in 1990. Meanwhile, several approaches and methods were chosen to be applied in teaching in order to achieve the objective of teaching learning. Theoretically, there are a lot of

methods and techniques of teaching and learning which can be used by teachers, but not all of them are helpful for their students. Concerning with the nature or characteristics of the early stages of English learners, teachers should not just apply any methods on conveying messages. However, they have to adjust the theory with students' circumstances. Allen (1983: 33) says that the teaching English to the beginner should need the techniques. The best technique is using an approach which still has relation to their world.

According to Scoot and Peter (1994), teachers are pressed to extend their craft to prepare more diverse students for work and life beyond schools. They are challenged to provide more authentic instructional contexts and activities than that of the traditional knowledge – based curricula. ATEEC (Advanced Technology Environmental Education Center) Fellows (2000) stated that students learn best, and retain what they have learned, when (1) they are interested in the subject matter and (2) concepts are applied to the context of the students' own lives. An excellent way to do this involves strategies of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL). These strategies work together to connect the content of knowledge with the context of application. From those statements we know that teachers must provide authentic instructional contexts and activities in teaching English. Hence, Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) is a suitable approach in foreign language teaching.

From the discussion above, the writer is interested in carrying out a research dealing with mastery of vocabulary. The students' mastery of vocabulary will encourage them to have good language skills. Due to the fact, in this research, the writer as the teacher brings forward the way of teaching English vocabulary using Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL). The material is related to the students' level and it involves them to learn actively. Hence, the writer takes courage to conduct a study entitled "Improving Students' Vocabulary Mastery In Learning

English Using Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL): A Classroom Action Research at the Fourth Year Students of SD Djama'atul Ichwan (DJI) Surakarta in 2005/2006 Academic Year.”

B. Previous Research

In this study, the writer summarizes the relevant previous researchers to prove the originality of this study. The first is Kunsusiyah (1997) with the title of her research “Teaching Vocabulary Using Picture and No Picture at MTs Nurul Huda Kembang Ampel Boyolali”. The purpose of her study is to know the result of teaching vocabulary using picture. The research design is experimental research, and the data were collected by giving tests to students in order to know their vocabulary mastery. The scores are obtained from the tests and then analyzed by using statistical calculation of t-test. The result of her experiment shows that the students who are taught vocabulary using picture have higher score than those taught using no picture. It can be concluded that the result of this application is successful since the students can enrich their vocabulary.

The second is Hanafi (2003), in her thesis entitled “Improving Kindergarten Students` Motivation In Learning English Using Song, Picture, And Stories (A Classroom Action Research In The Class `B` Students of R.A. Perwanida Surakarta In 2003 / 2004 Academic Year)”. Her research implementation includes 3 cycles with the result of teaching English by using song, picture, and stories always increases from Cycle One to Cycle Two and from Cycle Two to Cycle Three. According to her, the teacher can encourage the students to improve the motivation in learning English by using songs, pictures, and stories. Besides, the students become active in teaching-learning process both in responding and answering teachers` questions and instructions, and also in doing the exercises.

Based on the researches above, the writer studies language acquisition as well, but in different perspective. The writer has not found other researchers who have applied the CTL to improve the students' vocabulary mastery. The writer thinks that her study is different from others. The first researcher focuses on picture as an alternative approach of teaching vocabulary at Junior High School. While the second researcher, Hanafi, focuses learning English using songs, pictures, and stories to improve students' motivation at Kindergarten. On the basis of the reason above, the writer is interested in carrying out research dealing with mastery of vocabulary that is different from the previous ones.

C. Problem Statement

This research concerns with the following problems:

1. Do the students have adequate vocabulary in learning English?
2. How is the students' participation during English teaching-learning process?
3. How is the achievement of students' vocabulary mastery in their tests result?

D. Objective of the Study

Based on the problem statement above, the objectives of the study are:

1. To know whether or not the students have adequate vocabulary mastery in learning English.
2. To know the students' participation during English teaching-learning process using CTL to improve students' vocabulary mastery.
3. To describe the achievement of students' vocabulary mastery in learning English using CTL to improve their vocabulary mastery in their test results.

E. Limitation of the Study

This research has broader scope and it is impossible for the writer to handle all problems. Therefore, the writer limits the scope of the study. The writer wants to know whether or not the CTL method can improve the students' vocabulary mastery at the fourth year of SD Djama'atul Ichwan (DJI) Surakarta.

F. Benefit of the Study

In this study the writer expects that the research paper has some benefits both in theory and practice:

1. Theoretical benefit:
 - a. The finding of this research will enrich the theory of students' vocabulary mastery.
 - b. The result of the research paper can be a useful input in English teaching learning process especially for teaching vocabulary using CTL.
 - c. The finding of the research can be used as the reference for those who want to conduct a research in English teaching – learning process.
2. Practical benefit:
 - a. The research will improve the writer herself in mastering English.
 - b. The reader will get a large knowledge about teaching vocabulary using CTL.
 - c. The finding of this research will be useful to the readers who are interested in analyzing vocabulary mastery of elementary school.
 - d. For English teachers, the result of the study can help them in teaching vocabulary using CTL to improve the students' vocabulary mastery and motivate students to be active in the teaching learning process.

G. Research Paper Organization

Research paper organization is given in order that the readers could easily understand the context of the research paper. The study is divided into five chapters that will be organized as follows.

Chapter I is the introduction which consists of the background of the study, the previous research, the problem statement, the objective of the study, the limitation of the study, the benefit of the study, and the research paper organization.

Chapter II is the underlying theory. It covers three points of theory. The first is the characteristics of young learners. The second is the general concept of vocabulary mastery. It consists of the nature of vocabulary mastery, the kinds of vocabulary, the vocabulary limitation, and the teaching of vocabulary. The third is the general concept of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL). It consists of the notion of CTL, the strategies of CTL, the elements of CTL, and the classroom model of CTL

Chapter III is research methodology. This covers the setting and time of research, the subject of the research, the type of research, the research method, the data and data source, the method of collecting data, and the technique of analyzing data.

Chapter IV is the research finding and discussion of improving vocabulary mastery in learning English using CTL in SD Djama'atul Ichwan (DJI) Surakarta.

Chapter V is the last chapter. It consists of conclusion and suggestions.