

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the research, the problem of the research, the focus of the research, the operational definition of terms, the practical significance of the research, and the scope of the research.

1.1 Background of the Research

English as a foreign language has been taught in Indonesia in primary school since curriculum 1994, 2004, 2006, and 2013. Although the 2013 curriculum puts aside English lessons, it does not mean that learning English is prohibited, it is just that learning English is not an obligation to be implemented. Before the 2013 curriculum, English was included in local content at primary school and was implemented from 1st grade up to 6th grade. In line with the era of development and curriculum transformation, English learning in the new curriculum was no longer a local content and there is no obligation to carry out English learning in schools. In contrast, it only applies to grade 3 and grade 6, but the implementation of this program is only in few areas. It allows schools to flexibly design their curriculum with or without English lessons. According to Sudrajat, (2015, p.13) the government policies formally covers English lesson in elementary school which is in line with the Ministry of Education and Culture (Depdikbud RI) policy No 0847/1992, chapter VIII, which states that elementary school can add another lesson to their curriculum. Furthermore, circulating letter

or SK Mendikbud No 060/U/1993 on February 25 regarding the possibility of English lesson as local content at elementary school (Wijaya, 2015, p.122). This government policy becomes a reference for schools to modify their English learning curriculum.

Learning English for young learners in primary school is student habituation by covering four English language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) in one integrated theme. However, students have to recognize, remember, and master English vocabulary because it is a foundation for anyone who wants to learn and improve their English. This statement is strengthened by Cameron (2001, p.7) who stated that the words or vocabulary have a special purpose for children in learning a new language, children are encouraged to think of the new language as a set of words.

Sukmadinata (2011, p.31) states that learners is individual who behave or do activities that has essential characteristics and each of learners has a different skill and characteristics. According to Scott (2009, p.4) even the speed of students who are five to seven years old is different, they will be able to become fully competent in learning a second language. In this explanation, the young learners will still learn English as the second language or international language which they must develop in each level because their characteristics vary based on their age, background, skills, needs, and many others. A concrete example of characteristics of students aged 7-11 years is that they cannot decide something by themselves, because they also still need special attention from both their family and their surrounding environment.

The student has characteristics with a high sense of curiosity, such as constantly asking a question and always moving here and there. This statement was corroborated by Cameron (2001, p.4) that the children will always seek an attention and purpose of what people doing by putting their knowledge and experience into their attempts to make sense of other people's action and language. It is a key to understand how they respond to task or activity in language class. To learn or to do the task or even the activity, the student certainly has a different interest and motivation.

Based on the results of an interview with a grade 4 teacher at one of the private Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Jember, namely MI Ar-Rahim, it is obtained that students' interest and motivation were still low. Some students who have high scores are students with intelligence and those who receive motivation from their parents. Therefore, this matter can also affect learning English to students with low ability because not all students can absorb learning quickly.

Students' interest and motivation in learning English can also be seen from the media used by the teacher. At the time of the interview, the grade 4 teacher at MI Ar-Rahim stated that learning English was only done through worksheets. She also stated that learning English is taught not in isolation, but integrated. Therefore, the use of media that only uses worksheets can cause students' interest and motivation to decrease. Their interest and motivation have decreased because their activities in the classroom are only reading, writing, and listening to the teacher. Hence, there is a very little possibility if students can master English learning if the media and the way they learn only use worksheets.

There are only five to seven students who get the highest score in learning English. Students who pass the average scores are students who have great achievement in class and get motivated by internal (themselves) and external (family or environment) factors, this statement is based on preliminary observation that has been carried out by the researcher. All of these things are related to students achievement in learning English. The students' difficulties encountered by the researcher are memorizing and spelling the English vocabularies. The difficulty occurs due to several factors, there are characteristics of students who have short-term memory and students always use their mother tongue.

As found in the preliminary observation, the students' limited vocabulary might be caused by the lack of teacher applying learning media. Susanthi (2021, p.67) said, the limitation of teaching media in learning English also affects students' interest and motivation. Based on interviews with the classroom teacher, learning materials were delivered through an English's worksheet that has been provided by the government, so that students only have to write their answers on it. Ellis (1994, p.355) states that young learners need to move, learn through experience, unable to plan and control their activities yet, not afraid to take a risk or make a mistake, pay little attention to themselves or their actions, pay attention to the meaning of language and have limited experiences in life. This indicates that learning English for young learners will be more interactive if students are invited to be more active in class such as singing and following the movements of the song lyrics provided. However, this physical

activity must be balanced with the learning material provided in order to achieve the desired learning objectives.

Considering the observed difficulties and Ellis' statement about students' easiness in catching the meaning in the process of learning by their experiences, activities, and actions, the researcher hope that students' ability of English vocabulary mastery can be improved by using an English song. The use of English songs can help student to sing and move following the song lyrics and student can follow the process of learning English effectively and in fun way. Song is a good tool and believed to motivate students in process of learning English. When the learners like the song, they will be happy and enthusiastic to do it (Nurhayati, 2009, p.66). Ratmaningsih (2016, p.35) says that by using an English song can give language input which teach a conversation, vocabularies, grammar, pronunciation, and firming up memory and this is proved by the research of using an English song for young learners and its regarded as successful research. By using English songs students can memorize vocabulary through songs, sing along, and do body movements in the classroom. The use of English songs takes into account the interests and characteristics of students, such as 1) students who have high curiosity, 2) students can determine what they like, and 3) students can cooperate. Then, the use of songs in learning English is in accordance with the students' conditions at MI Ar-Rahim because it can help students memorize and improve vocabulary mastery.

In connection with the problems that have been stated above regarding the vocabulary mastery of young learners which is still low and the use of learning media that is not optimal, in this study the researcher attempted to increase

English vocabulary mastery of young learners by using an English songs through this study entitled “The Use of English Song to Improve Young Learners’ Vocabulary Mastery”.

1.2 Problem of the Research

Based on the background of the research above, the formulation problem that can be taken is “how can teaching using English songs improve vocabulary mastery?”

1.3 Focus of the Research

Focus of the research is to increase English vocabulary mastery especially verbs and adjectives of young learners by using an English song.

1.4 The Operational Definition of Terms

1.4.1 English Song

Brewster (2002, p.162) states that there are many advantages of using a song as learning resources. Therefore, the use of songs can be an interesting learning media. The use of English songs in this study uses songs entitled “Opposites – Word Power” and “Walking-walking – Dance Along”. Both songs were produced by Pinkfong Kids’ Songs and Stories. The song entitled “Opposites – Word Power” focuses on Adjectives. The second song entitled “Walking-Walking – Dance Along” focuses on Verbs. Both of these songs are joyful and have a deep meaning because young learners can follow the

movements according to the lyrics, so it can be ascertained that the classroom condition will be more lively and fun.

1.4.2 Vocabulary Mastery

Vocabulary skills are considered as a critical aspect of foreign language learners because when students only have a lack of a list of vocabulary it will impede successful communication. The use of language leads to increased vocabulary knowledge. Vocabulary is an important foundation in the formation of spoken and written text for a successful result. Vocabulary also plays an important role in all language skills (Nation, 2001, p.761). In this research, students are said to master vocabulary that they can achieve a passing grade on the vocabulary test which contains verbs and adjectives of daily life.

1.5 Practical Significance of the Research

The findings of this research will practically benefit teachers of English at the primary school level. The result of this research could help English teachers to modify the process of learning to make it more effective and fun.

1.6 Scope of the Research

The subject of the research is the fourth (4th) grade of MI Ar-Rahim Jember in the academic year 2020/2021. This research focuses on the improvements experienced by students in vocabulary mastery through listening to songs.