

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the background of the study, statement of the problems, objectives of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, and research report organization.

1.1 Background of the Study

People need language to communicate and understand each other. It means that language is really important. One of the languages that becomes an international or a global language that is spoken by people who have different backgrounds of cultures and languages is English. In this globalization era, people are required to learn and master English in order to make them easier to communicate.

In Indonesia, people learn more than one language such as Indonesian and local language. English becomes a foreign language for Indonesian people. However, it is really needed for people to learn English because of the importance of English in this era. BNSP (*Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan*, 2006:123) in Halimah (2017) explains that English is a tool to communicate in spoken and written. Communication is a method in understanding and expressing information, thinking, feeling, and improving knowledge, technology, and culture.

In teaching and learning English, one of the elements that must be learned by the students as a basic competence is vocabulary. By learning, understanding and mastering vocabulary, competencies like reading, writing, listening, and speaking can be reached easily. Rivers in Nunan (1991: 117) as cited in

Kusumayati (2010) states that without understanding an extensive vocabulary, the use of the structures and functions for comprehensible communication will be so difficult to learn and reach. Therefore, the acquisition of an adequate vocabulary is essential for successful second language use (Kusumayati, 2010).

It is important to introduce English vocabulary to young learners as a basic step for them in order to help them in understanding utterances and preparing them to learn English in the next level. Cameron (2001:72) as cited by Halimah (2017) says that in learning a foreign language at primary level, a useful vocabulary is really important to be built up as it is a central of learning and mastering a foreign language.

The first graders of elementary school are categorized as young learners. Their ages are generally between 6 – 8 years old. Piaget's theory as stated in Blake and Pope (2008) divides the cognitive development of children or young learners in four steps. In 6 – 8 years old, children are able to do one-step logic problems, develop language, continue to be egocentric, and complete operations.

Piaget's theory in Madya (2004) also states that children are not interested in abstract things due to their children intellectual development. Children need simple and concrete examples in order to understand how the target language operates. Teachers should minimize theoretical explanation and implement repetition in teaching children a target language as their attention span is naturally short. Involving children physically, verbally, and mentally in games, role plays, songs, and simulations are essential to arouse and maintain their interest in teaching and learning process. In addition, teacher should use the various types of

media such as visual, audio, or audio – visual to reach the teaching and learning goals.

In education, young learners acquire knowledge formally from school environment and teachers, and informally from family and environment. In order to give knowledge formally to students, teachers need to create various activities, so an understanding of students' thinking can be developed. Motivational set, modeling, and assignments as teaching strategies can be also implemented according to students' cognitive level. (Blake & Pope, 2008).

Teaching young learners and adult is quite different especially in teaching English as a foreign language. It is challenging for most teachers. Abe (1994: 264) as cited by Madya (2004) states that teachers should be considered to present the language in chunks, present cultural components, pay attention to how to talk with children, use visual teaching aids, and enter the children's world in teaching language to them. Moreover, Brown (2001:87) as cited in Kurnia (2017) states it requires specific skills and intuitions to successfully teaching young learners that differ from those appropriate for adult teaching.

From the facts above, this is the reason why teachers should emphasize various activities in teaching English to young learners. Teachers must facilitate students with various activities to make the students enjoy, interested and active in the learning process. Thus, they will have dynamic learning process and not get bored especially in learning something new such as English as a foreign language (Astuti, 2015). By participating in creative and interesting learning activities, students will easily get and understand what they learn in the classroom, which

can develop their motivation for further learning, especially for young learners who learn English as a foreign language.

Scot and Yterberg (1990) as cited in Astuti (2015) states that young learners have an amazing ability to absorb language through play and other activities which make the learning activity enjoyable. If children are happy and self – confident in the learning process, they will learn a foreign language more successfully. Therefore, there must be some interesting ways from teachers to build their students' self-esteem and self-confidence. Teachers can involve children in appropriately challenging activities in using the target language (Madya, 2004).

There are many methods and techniques which can be employed by teachers such as the use appropriate teaching media. They are role play, cards, photographs, game, film, song, and other interesting media (Astuti, 2015).

Flash card is one of the media or teaching aids which can be used and implemented by teachers in creating an interesting and various activities for young learners in teaching and learning process. Teachers usually use flash cards a media to implement drilling as a teaching method for students. It is believed that flash cards can improve young learners' interest in learning a target language. Furthermore, young learners' imaginary can also be built from the photographs they saw in flash cards. Pasa (2006) as cited in Astuti (2015) says that when teachers give pictures to students, they were interested and curious. It shows that there was a major distinction within the students' achievement in mastering English as a foreign language in Indonesia.

From the background explained above, this study only focuses on conducting classroom action research in introducing English vocabulary to the first graders of SDN Brumbungan Semarang using teaching media, flash cards. The researcher decides to conduct this study because the researcher believes that introducing English vocabulary as a basic competence to the first graders is important. Moreover, the researcher believes that the use of flash cards as a new teaching media for the first graders in SDN Brumbungan Semarang can be really helpful for them in learning English as a foreign language. Therefore, the researcher intends to make a study with the title **“Flash Cards’ Contribution in Introducing English Vocabulary to the First Graders of SDN Brumbungan Semarang and Their Responses: A Classroom Action Research.”**

1.2 Statement of the Problems

This study attempts to answer these following research questions:

1. How far can flash cards contribute in introducing English vocabulary to young learners?
2. How do the students respond in learning English vocabulary using flash cards?
3. How does the teacher find out the students’ responses in learning English vocabulary using flash cards?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Derived from the research questions, this study aims:

1. To find out the contribution of flash cards in introducing English vocabulary to young learners.
2. To describe the students responses in learning English vocabulary using flash cards.
3. To describe the way teacher finds out the students' responses in learning English vocabulary using flash cards.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The main focus of this study is in introducing English vocabulary to young learners using flash cards as the teaching media. From any levels of elementary students, the researcher only collects the data from the first graders of SDN Brumbungan in the academic year 2019/2020. There are two classes of first graders: Class A and B. Each class consists of 26 students.

The materials that are given to the first graders by the researcher are only English vocabulary, more specifically the name of colors and fruits.

1.5 Significance of the Study

It is expected that this study may provide meaningful information to:

1. The teacher, that this study may give alternative media in teaching and introducing English vocabulary to young learners in order to make a creative and interesting leaning and teaching activities.
2. The students, that this study may help the students to learn English vocabulary and enrich their experience in learning English.

3. The researcher, that this study may enrich the knowledge about learning and teaching activities including strategies and media used in classroom.
4. Future researchers, that this study may be expected to be able to help other researchers in conducting the research in the similar field and to become a reference.

1.6 Research Report Organization

This research report consists of several chapters. It is explained as follows:

Chapter I: Introduction covers background of the study, statement of the problems, objectives of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, and research report organization.

Chapter II: Review of Related Literature covers the previous study and theoretical framework that will be needed by the researcher to support the researcher to analyze the data and construing the results of the research.

Chapter III: Research Method covers research design, research method, unit of analysis, technique of data gathering, and technique of data analysis.

Chapter IV: Findings and Discussion discuss the findings of the data analysis.

Chapter V: Conclusion and Suggestion cover the conclusion of the research report and suggestion for further research.