

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background of the Study

English is very useful for communication and it is an international language. Nowadays, English becomes an important foreign language in Indonesia and it is considered to be the most important language among other foreign languages. That is one reason why English is offered to elementary school as an optional local content. Another reason is based on 1994 Curriculum that English is taught to the elementary school students starting from the fourth grade. However, there are some elementary schools that give English to their students starting under the fourth grade. 'This is the consideration that a critical period for children to learn a language is at the age of two to fourteen years old', said Tjahajani (1996:1).

The teaching of English to the students under fourth grade (in the beginner levels) should cover vocabulary first as the important language component. English also has four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and other language components (pronunciation and grammar), which should be mastered. Wright (1989:29) states that '... a child starts to learn a foreign language, the easier it will be for him/her to acquire the vocabulary'. So, it is very important to teach vocabulary for the elementary school students where they are in the basic level before they go to their higher ones (levels). It means

that teaching-learning activities should be stressed on the vocabulary field especially for beginners.

In teaching elementary students' vocabulary, teachers should also give them a kind of test to give the feedback for the students because teaching-learning activities should be supported by testing. There is a relation between testing and teaching and both of them cannot be separated. Teaching is not complete without testing. However, in reality tests make the students afraid and nervous so the results of their tests are bad because of the tests' format itself. The format of the test usually uses 'words' to test the students. In order to reduce their fear and nervousness, the writer suggests this study. According to Allen (1983:12), '...in some classes for beginners like the third year elementary school students, teachers use three ways to show the meanings of vocabulary words, namely:

1. Using picture in teaching-learning activities
2. Giving explanations in the students' own language
3. Giving definitions in simple English, using vocabulary that the students already know

Among those three ways, the most effective media in teaching-learning and testing vocabulary is the first one that is using pictures. The students in the third year of elementary school are interested in using picture as a media in teaching-learning activities, so it is better if teachers also use pictures in testing them. Pictures can make the children more interested in doing their test and they will not be afraid or nervous again so the result of their test will be better.

Due to the fact that teachers rarely use pictures in testing the students' vocabulary competence, a study on pictorial vocabulary test for the third year of elementary school students is carried out. This study is intended to help teachers prepare and make a good test especially a vocabulary test through pictures as an instrument to increase the students' motivation and to measure their ability in the process of teaching-learning English vocabulary. The writer designs this study through pictures because they are suitable for the elementary level students. The students in the elementary are still children and they like pictures and pictures seem interesting for them. Tang (1981:11) points out that, "The pictures had an irresistible appeal for the children. They created suspense and surprise as well as interest..." he also states that, "Pictures aroused the students' interest and attracted their attention." In line with Tang's opinion, Ernestova (1981:9) stated that, "Pictures increase students' motivation and provide useful practice material as well as test material." Therefore, the writer believes that the children can get the meaning of a word more easily by looking at the pictures. They can also easily visualize the ideas from pictures and finally, they can do the test effectively as pictures become an effective and interesting media for the third year of elementary school students.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the background, the central question to be answered in this study is: How should Pictorial Vocabulary Test be implemented in teaching English Vocabulary to the third year of elementary school students?

1.3 Objective of the Study

This study is intended to describe how pictorial vocabulary test should be implemented in teaching English vocabulary to the third year of elementary school students.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Theoretical point of view the results of this study provided a clear description about pictorial vocabulary test for the elementary school students. From practical point out of view the results of this study gave some helps for supporting teaching learning of vocabulary in the third year of elementary school students.

1.5 Scope and Limitations

Due to the limited time, facilities, and expenses the writer considers it is necessary to set limitation on it. As the title given to it, this study focuses on suggesting the use of the pictorial vocabulary test for the elementary school students. The vocabulary tested is those words that belong to concrete words that often appear in the daily life of the students.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, some key words used in this study need to be defined. They are:

- Pictorial** : The adjective form of picture that means using pictures or relating to pictures. (Oxford Dictionary 1995:871)
- Vocabulary test** : A test through all the words known by a student or taken from the particular textbooks that have been used in class. (Oxford Dictionary 1995:1331)
- Elementary School Students** : Students who are in the early stages of a course of study which are taught to children between 6 and 12 years old. (Oxford Dictionary 1995:394)

1.7 Research Methods

The writer through library research creates this study. She tries to find out the materials that are relevant with the topic by reading different sources (theses, books, and articles) and then, she explores the teaching and testing of vocabulary. She also describes the use of pictorial vocabulary in testing. Finally, she designs a pictorial vocabulary test items for the third year of elementary school students.

1.8 Organization of the Thesis

This study consists of six chapters. Chapter one describes about the Introduction. While, The Theories in Teaching of Vocabulary is discussed in

chapter two and Testing of Vocabulary is discussed in chapter three. Chapter four is about Pictorial Vocabulary. Then, Pictorial Vocabulary in Vocabulary Testing will be discussed in chapter five. Finally, chapter six covers Conclusion and Suggestions.