

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. THE BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

English as a language has a very important position because it is used internationally. Realizing that, the government in Indonesia has decreed English as a foreign language taught from the primary school up to the tertiary level in both private and state schools. There are four language skills in English, they are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Educational Level – Oriented Curriculum (KTSP – 2006) states that students must be able to master the four language skills. It is impossible that the students master each skill without mastering vocabulary since it plays the important function in order to be understood in the context of communication.

Based on the observation done by the researcher at SD DARMA Medan, exactly in the fourth grade, it was found that the score of the test in semester 1 before getting remedial test are quite different. In class 4-A, 60% of the students get remedial test. In 4-B, it is found that 25% students also get remedial test. They have to get remedial test since their score are under Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimum (70). It means that students' achievement of 4-A is still low. Therefore, this class will be the focus of the researcher to improve their achievement.

Besides, the students said that learning English especially in vocabulary is very difficult to master. They faced many problems in learning vocabulary. The main problem was the students difficult to memorize a long list of words, because

usually teacher taught vocabulary by asking the students to open the dictionary, to find the meaning, to memorize the words in front of the class and after that, they forgot it. Another problem was the teachers' technique used in teaching vocabulary was not interesting. They only give the students a non-stop drilling and memorization practice. Besides, the students were given the tasks that stated in their "Grow with English" textbook. It made the students lazy in learning vocabulary and most of the students got low score in vocabulary.

Hatch and Brown (1995:1) define vocabulary as a list or set of words for a particular language or a list or set of word that individual speaker of language might use. Vocabulary learning is a very important part of learning a language. Students intend to be able to listen, to speak, to read, and to write in English in order to enable to communicate. To achieve this aims, students must master a number of vocabularies as a condition in language mastery. With the rich vocabulary students will be able to communicate effectively and vice versa.

Therefore, to solve the problems, a teacher should know how to stimulate students' curiosity and must be able to present the lesson in such a way as to make the teaching process more interesting. In order to make the teaching and learning process easy and interesting, the researcher will use media in teaching and learning vocabulary. Hamalik (1994:6) says that media is as tools of communication to make teaching and learning process more effective. Therefore, this study will focus on using pictures as the media of teaching English vocabulary.

Picture can be tools or media to stimulate students in describing an object or a person in the pictures. Students can acquire the meaning by seeing the things in the pictures without teacher's explanation. Latuheru (1988) states that Pictures can translate abstract ideas into more realistic form, can be easily obtained, can be used in different academic levels, and can attract students' interests. Besides, the use of pictures in the classroom provides a stimulating focus for the students' interest because everybody likes to look at pictures (Lutfiyah, 2009). It can be concluded that pictures can help the students to describe an object or a person easily because they can enjoy the learning process.

The writer hopes that this study will be able to trigger students' interest and motivation in learning many words related to image that they see through pictures. So, the writer wants to conduct a study to find out whether pictures can speed up the process of learning vocabulary and to prove whether the application of pictures significantly improve the students' vocabulary achievement.

B. THE PROBLEM OF THE STUDY

In relation to the background of the study, a research problem is formulated in the form question as "Is the students' vocabulary achievement significantly improved by applying pictures in the learning?"

C. THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to investigate whether the application of pictures in the learning significantly improve the students' vocabulary achievement.

D. THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

There are many alternative media which can be used in teaching; they are audio media, visual media and audio visual media. The media which considered as an appropriate one in this study is pictures as classified into visual media. Then, the vocabulary that will be taught is the context of the house and the school as the places of students' daily life. This study is specified with a focus on the effectiveness of applying pictures of the house and the school in the learning to improve the vocabulary achievement of the grade IV students at SD Darma Medan.

E. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Findings of this research are expected to be useful theoretically and practically.

Theoretically, the findings offer further horizons in language learning theories.

Practically, the findings offer (1) English teachers in providing them an alternative media in their teaching vocabulary; especially the places of students' daily life case, (2) The students, to make them enjoy themselves in learning English in the class and to increase their motivation and their English vocabulary easily because pictures are the interesting media to use in learning vocabulary, and (3) The readers in serving them a good understanding how to improve the students' vocabulary achievement by applying pictures in the learning.