

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The development of education system in Indonesia has been extended for years to years. Based on the 1994 curriculum, English has been taught at elementary School as one of the optional subjects particularly in big cities. It is considered a significant subject to be taught to students early at their schooling. The introduction of English as early as possible is in line with government's emphasis on the development of quality human resources to prepare for global competition. English for young learners has the purpose of providing the students with the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

The development of these four language skills cannot be separated from spelling. To this point, Joshi, Treiman, Carreker, and Moats (2009) argue that spelling has a strong relationship with reading comprehension and obviously connected to writing. The correlation between spelling and reading comprehension is high because both depend on a common denominator: proficiency with language (p.9). Smedley (1983) observes that spelling is an important aspect of language knowledge. Poor spelling, for example, can interfere with communication between the writer and the reader. In line with this, Boston (1998) states that English spelling is a system which integrates phonetic and morphemic patterns to produces meaning in writing. Speaking, listening, reading, writing and critical thinking provide the context in which students acquire the

knowledge, understandings, skills and strategies which they need in order to spell. In short, when they write, students apply the knowledge and understandings they have learn about how to spell words.

English spelling is not easy to learn and understand by young children. Spelling errors are probably experienced by those learning English from preschool to kindergarten. Occasionally, they, particularly the young learners possibly, do not know how to spell the word. In addition, students must learn first the alphabet because each letter has different sound. How to spell the word is not just to write a single letter from left to right but they have to know each sound.

Some of the researchers agree that English spelling must be taught to the kindergarten students. Treiman, Cassar and Zukowski (1994) found that for children as young as kindergarten-aged, the letter sounds of words play an important role in children's spelling skills. Joshi et.al (2009) examine that spelling is a linguistic task that requires knowledge of sound and letter patterns. Spelling is the basic form to step forward to learn reading and writing task due to related to letter, sound and spell patterns.

Meanwhile, the way to teach English spellings to the kindergarten students have several teaching aids to support in the class. Asokhia (2009) observes that English Language instructional materials include words cards, pictures, objects, puzzles and so on. These materials can be grouped into three sections. First, audio deals with what is heard; music, drums, radio, tape recorder, projectors, DVD and any sound effect that can be heard. Second, Visuals refer to things that can be seen; comprising of posters, charts, chalkboard, flannel graph, flashcards, puzzles,

objects – (real), projectors, cartoons, television, computer CD, internet and so on. Third, Multi-sensory refers to where pupils learn through the five senses – see, hear, smell, taste and touch. This can take the form of role-play, demonstration, models, simulation, experiments, excursion, visits and so on.

Nicholson (1998) points out that flashcards can foster automatically by helping children to read words accurately and quickly. Flashcards are one of the appropriate tools delivered to the students as this aid has many advantages. First, flashcards can help to build knowledge of these high frequency words, which have to be known if children are to bootstrap themselves into reading of text. Second, flashcards can be used as a scaffolding technique. Third, Flashcards are less expensive cost and simple to make it. Fourth, Flashcards can make a difficult to read story more accessible to poor readers. Fifth, Flashcards are useful for training children to read regularly spelled words. Sixth, Flashcards can promote fluency and in turn help reading comprehension. Flashcards are useful and helpful to the students and the teacher in learning English lesson. Besides, the writer considers that Flashcards is the right tool to stimulate students when they bored in the class.

One of the reasons why the writer chooses flashcards as the main topic of this study is the background of her field work. Once as I was an English teacher in KUMON (Mathematics and English Course), I used to have a kindergarten student who could not spell words correctly. His name is Vincent Matthew. In English class, he was one of the smart students because when I used flashcards in

the class regularly for 5 meetings, he could spell and write the words correctly. This is an indication that using flashcards can help the students to spell and write the words correctly. This is also one of the writer's reasons to choose this topic because the writer found the phenomenon in surrounding her field work by using flashcards. Another reason of choosing flashcards for this study is that the school includes teaching spelling in the curriculum wherein the teacher frequently use flashcards.

In addition, there are three researchers related to the use of flashcards in some teaching learning process. First, Richgels (1998) observed preschool and kindergarten children's spelling and reading abilities which use the two traditional letter tests: Alphabet recitation and Alphabet Flashcards. Second, Goswami (1995) observed the use of word family flashcards such as Rhyme and Analogy card games in practice reading to the children. Third, Tan and Nicholson (1997) found that a short session of flashcard training with 20 difficult words from a 200 word story set up a below-average reader for a positive reading experience. The result of the study indicated that flashcards training groups were significantly better than the control group.

Therefore, with different topic and different background of the learners, the writer would like to do the study related to the phenomenon that has been explained above. The research is about the use of flashcards in teaching English Spelling to kindergarten students. Being different with the objects that have been used by them, the writer is going to do the research at the age around five to six

years old. In different situation and condition, the writer used the formal kindergarten school rather than course. The results of the study are intended to support the effort of improving spelling skill to the students.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the background of the study, the writer defines the problem as follows: How are flashcards used in teaching English spellings to kindergarten students at Theresia Kindergarten School B1 class?

1.3 Objective of the Study

Based on the statement of the problem above, the objectives of the study is to find out how the flashcards are used in teaching English Spelling to kindergarten students at Theresia kindergarten school B1 class.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study attempts to give some contributions to the effort of developing the students in English Spelling through flashcards such as First, to enrich study about spelling to young learners. Second, to encourage teacher to used flashcards more in their practice teaching. Third, to encourage creativity in teaching English to Young Learners. Fourth, to inform teacher in teaching English to Foreign Language as learning flashcards. The writer also wishes that this study could give a significant contribution to the students of Faculty of Humanities majoring Linguistics.

1.5 Scope and limitation

The scope of this study includes the use of flashcards in Teaching English spelling to kindergarten students aged 5 years old. The participants of this study are Theresia kindergarten students in B1 class. The number of the students in B1 is 16. This class has an English teacher, Pipit. B1 class uses teaching aids such as pictures, posters, realia, books and flashcards. The writer conducted the study to find out the advantages of flashcards and how flashcards are used in teaching English Spelling at Theresia kindergarten School B1 in Surabaya. Because of the limited participants of the observation, the result of this study cannot be generalized to all of kindergarten school in Surabaya.

1.6 Definition of the key terms

1. **Spelling:** a linguistic task that requires knowledge of sounds and letter patterns (Joshi, et.al (2009).
2. **Flashcards:** cards bearing words, numbers, or pictures briefly displayed, usually as a learning aid (Merriam-Webster's Desk dictionary)
3. **Kindergarten:** a critical year for all children a year of transition from preschool programs or home to formal schooling. (Nellhaus. 2008)

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

