

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

According to Cambridge dictionary “language” (2019) is a communication system consisting of sounds, words, and grammars, or a communication system used by people as a communication tool. Language is one of the important features of communication (Sirbu 2015), so the knowledge of language is needed to understand what it means. For example, in school there is a process of communication between students and teachers in the classroom. When the teacher says “let’s open the book and we start to study”, then the students open their book so there is a cognitive process about the concept of sentence “let’s open the book”.

Another example, when the students are given sentence “the clouds grow on the trees” they may understand and can reflect those sentence whether it is correct or not (Pontecorvo, Orsolini dan Zucchermarglio 1989). These cognitive processes to understand and reflect language is part of metalinguistic study. The process and the activity show the children’s metalinguistic awareness or metalinguistic activity (Nagy and Anderson 1995).

According to Myhill D. (2015) metalinguistic knowledge tends to be used synonymously with metalinguistic awareness, metalinguistic understanding, metalinguistic activity, and others (Myhill dan Jones 2015). Ratner (2013) In *The Development of Language* use both metalinguistic awareness and metalinguistic knowledge to refer to the same concept.

Another example of phenomena related to metalinguistic awareness is shown by a child responding about phoneme. The researcher asked the child in Indonesian language to produce a phoneme /o/ and /ɲ/ in the Indonesian words *foto* and *tolong*, also *dating* and *santan*. The child produced the word *foto* and knew that the word *foto* represents the vowel /o/ rather than the word *tolong*. Additionally, the child also produced the word *dating* and knew that the word *dating* represents the vowel /ɲ/ rather than the word *santan*.

These experiences indicate the child understands about the concept of phoneme as the result of his conscious effort of thinking and reflecting about the sound pattern. The ability of thinking and reflecting about phoneme and the child understands the concept of phoneme show his phonological awareness, which is one of the types of metalinguistic awareness (Nagy dan Anderson 1995). Furthermore, his understanding about the certain sound in the word phoneme that distinguishes one word from another is based on his linguistic knowledge.

According to the example above indicates that there is a distinction between linguistic knowledge and metalinguistic awareness. Hana (2011) stated that linguistic knowledge is a scientific study that concern languages. Linguistic Knowledge is a knowledge and understanding of language (Fromkin, Rodman dan Hyams 2011). On the other hand, metalinguistic awareness is the ability to manipulate and reflect the features of language (Nagy and Anderson 1995). Metalinguistic awareness refers to the knowledge of language, which allows student to understand and define a particular language.

According to (Bialystok, 2012; Kuo& Anderson, 2008), phonological awareness is one of metalinguistic awareness components that is playing important role in children's literacy development. To understand the relationship between sound and letters, phonological awareness is required as a prerequisite (Torgesen dan Wagner 1998). A child can learn that a word is composed of sound and syllable, separate and combine syllable, and produce new word using sound units due to this skill (Gunes 2007). For example, children respond to a researcher's question about letter. The researcher asked the child in the Indonesian language to identify the letters of the word "mawar", and then the student mentions the letter "m" "a" "w" "a" "r" correctly. In the example, the child was able to identify words about letter. These actions indicate the child understands the concept of letter as the result of his conscious effort to understand and reflect about the word structure. The ability to understand and reflect the letter and for a child to understands the concept of letter shows his phonological awareness.

Children's ability to read and write is greatly influenced by phonological awareness (Castle & Colheart, 2004; Chow, McBride-Chang, & Burgess, 2005). Phonological awareness is a skill that cannot develop by itself but rather a skill that must be developed and taught, is part of reading and writing problems that have an important role effect on reading and writing achievement in the future (HW, et al. 2002). Daffern (2018) argues that young literacy students must utilize their control of phonological awareness to become successful writers.

Another example of phenomena related to phonological awareness, and monosyllabic word *cat* that has an onset may be constituted by a single phoneme

c, or by two or more consonantal sounds *s* and *m* of the word *smoke*. Also in the word *big* and *pig* there is a different phoneme of /p/ and /b/ but they have similar sound. Awareness of phoneme, develop at an age when children have already begun their reading instruction (Treiman dan Zukowski, Levels of phonological awareness 1991). Literate adults who do not use an alphabetical writing system do not succeed in their phoneme and reading (Read, et al. 1986). These findings of this study propose that the acquisition of the alphabet writing system affects phonological awareness.

Based on the explanation above it indicates that there is a distinction between metalinguistic awareness and phonological awareness. For example in Indonesian language, the students are given instructions about “*tulislah kata bangun dan survei*”, when the students can write the word *bangun* and *survey* correctly, so they have a metalinguistic awareness and phonological awareness. There is a cognitive process to understand about the concept of word, so it’s called as metalinguistic awareness. While, the students may understand about the word that consists of phoneme and grapheme, it’s called as phonological awareness.

In psycholinguistics, studies about phonological awareness are under the discussion of literacy development in children, especially in writing and reading development. According to several studies (Lieberman dan Shankweiler 1985) the words composed of phoneme, syllable, and morpheme, children who learn to read and spell using the alphabet, need to be aware of the part to make the connection between speaking and writing (phonological awareness). In addition, phonological

awareness has an important role in students' proficiency in writing (Erdogan 2011). The results of this study indicate that the success of learners either children or adults is related to their level of phonological awareness of word structure.

A research conducted by Vernon and Ferreiro(1999)about writing development: a neglected variable in the consideration of phonological awareness in Spanish-speaking kindergartners. Phonological awareness is not a phenomenon, but it develops at various levels and this development is related to the development of children's writing.

Moreover, a research done by Sun B, (2018) is one of the significant studies related to phonological, morphological, and syntactic which is included in the aspects of metalinguistic awareness. The subjects of this study were Singaporean students and Minland Chinese students. The result of research involving between two groups of Subjects, found that phonological awareness has little variance when compared with morphological awareness and syntactic awareness.

Another study conducted by Frost (2001) about phonemic awareness, spontaneous writing, reading, and spelling development from a preventive perspective. The spontaneous writing attempts of 44 first-graders until the middle of grade two. The result showed remarkable differences between two groups, they are showed the different pattern of development in learning to read and spell during grades 1 and 2.

Based on the previous study, the study about phonological awareness tends to be conducted in language-specific context. The writer cannot find any researcher conducted a study about phonological awareness in Indonesia

language, especially in writing, yet it is very important to explain the development of children's literacy. Therefore, the writer is interested in focusing the current study on phonological awareness in writing by the first grade students to enrich metalinguistic study, specifically phonological awareness in Indonesian.

Analysis of metalinguistic understanding, for example, focuses principally on the three components of metalinguistic understanding in the early years, and closely related to the development of writing (Shu, 2000; Wang, 2013) and has different effects on the development of children's literacy especially in the language of the alphabet (Adams, 1990; Bowey, 1988; Ku, 2003). So far research in the field of metalinguistic awareness has been very limited to the role of metalinguistic understanding in developing spelling competencies, especially in terms of phonological awareness (eg. sound pattern knowledge) (Bourassa, Treiman, & Kessler, 2006; Nunes, Bryant, & Bindman, 2006; Thévenin, Totereau, Fayol, & Jarousse, 1999), and metaorthographic knowledge (i.e. knowledge of a word) (Caravolas, Kessler, Hulme, & Snowling, 2005).

There are four reasons to conduct this study to the first grader students. First of all, the writer cannot find any researcher conducted the study neither about phonological awareness in writing done in Indonesian language nor Indonesian students. Second, in the first grade is the further development of children's phonological awareness, especially in writing. Third, the writer has an assumption that the student who have skill of writing or may they have not, they may have lack of phonological awareness or well-phonological awareness developed. Thus,

a test of phonological awareness in writing skill is needed to identify their current phonological awareness in writing.

Fourth, the reason to conduct this study is to know that phonological awareness is strongly linked to children's ability to read and write (Castle & Colheart, 2004; Chow, McBride-Chang, & Burgess, 2005) and become an important topic of discussion in literacy development. Therefore, this study conducted under the research project of Children Literacy Development by Masitha Achmad Syukri, is considered necessary to be conducted to Indonesian first graders in order to describe their current phonological awareness in writing in Indonesian language.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

According to the background of the study explained above, the research question, as follow:

How is the current phonological awareness in writing showed by Indonesian first graders of two elementary schools in Surabaya?

1.3. Objective of the Study

According to the statements of the problem above, this study aims to analyze the current phonological awareness in writing skill showed by Indonesian first graders of two elementary schools in Surabaya. Additionally, this study also describes the participant's performance on the test of phonological awareness in writing, which includes two tasks, namely word recognition and grapheme-phoneme correspondence.

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study has two contributions, both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it is intended to enhance knowledge that can contribute to psycholinguistic study, especially in literacy development and phonological awareness. Since most of the previous study concern with the phonological awareness in writing that observed in overseas student, this study focuses specifically on the phonological awareness used by Indonesian student. The writer hopes the findings presented in this study can be a reference for researcher to conduct further research in the same field. Also, the writer hopes this study can give new insight for further research with similar topic concerning phonological awareness in writing, especially in the Indonesian language and Indonesian students remember the study about this topic is limited.

Practically, the writer hope it can give contribution in teaching and learning process of children's literacy development of Elementary School, especially in writing. This study is hoped can be a reference for the teacher to know what actually their children need to improve their phonological awareness, especially in writing development. It is expected to help the teacher find out what the student have already known and what they have not already known in learning to write. Moreover, the writer hopes to have a use for teacher in order to give what kinds of phonological awareness intervention for student, in certain grade level. Additionally, the result of this study can increase awareness of children literacy development, especially about phonological awareness in writing.

1.5. Definition of Key Terms

In order to avoid misconceptions, the writer provides several key terms as follows;

- **Metalinguistic Awareness:** Knowledge about language itself, for example, an understanding of what a word is and a consciousness of the sound of language (Melzi dan Schick 2013).
- **Phonological awareness:** The understanding that words consists of sound units, including larger units (syllables) and smaller units (phonemes) (Melzi dan Schick 2013).
- **Writing:** An act of choosing, forming, representing, and repairing (D. A. Myhill 2011) and those draw crucially on metalinguistic activity.
- **Word recognition:** The recognition of letter which represents words in the orthography of the language (Melzi dan Schick 2013).
- **Grapheme-phoneme correspondence rules:** The relationship between a letter, combination of letters, and the sounds they represent. Graphemes are the actual graphic forms or elements of the writing system. Phonemes are the basic sounds of a language (Melzi dan Schick 2013).