

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Since science and technology have developed so rapidly, and the language used to communicate the findings of science and technology has been mostly English, Indonesian people have got to learn it if they do not want to be left behind. Consequently, it is learned and taught, either formally or informally in many parts of our country.

Recently much attention has been paid to the possibility of teaching English at the elementary school because it is assumed that younger students (in this case elementary school students) have the capacity for learning and acquiring a new language (in this case English) more easily than adults. Kasbolah (1992: 11-12) says,

Research on language development between 1950s and 1960s showed that the children possessed unique capacities for language learning. The main argument was that psychologists and linguists felt that the sooner the student earned a language, the better. They should begin as soon as they began his formal education.

As its manifestation in our country, in the 1994 curriculum, English may be taught as an elective subject at the elementary school, starting from the fourth year ; it is a

new experience for the fourth year students to hear and use English words and even sentences. Therefore, teaching English as a foreign language to beginners at elementary school is very interesting in spite of its difficulties because the teacher obviously has to help beginners at elementary school in such a way that they master simple words to express simple ideas and their daily needs.

In spite of all the help that teachers may give to the students, the sheer number of words to be learned in a new language (in this case English) is a burden for most learners (Brown, 1987:12). The students tend to be asked to memorize the words already explained in class and they have to do the same thing again and again. It is undeniable that they get bored, tired and even hate it. As a result, the teaching-learning process will be disturbed and the students fail to master the vocabulary.

In fact, vocabulary plays an important role in the process of achieving language teaching objectives, the mastery of language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Someone can understand what other people say (listening skill), he can understand the written words (reading skill), he can express his ideas well both orally (speaking skill), and written form (writing skill) by mastering the vocabulary. Fries (1988 : 37) points out, "Learning a language practical-

ly always means primarily learning the words of that language".

Since vocabulary is central to language mastery, it should be stressed the most from the very beginning. New words must be repeated and practiced until they are established so firmly that they cannot be lost (Brown, 1987 : 12). It is clear that repetition is very important and it should not be given once at a stretch. Repetition should be spaced and should be given at different times with longer pauses. And the repetition should be carefully planned and carried out by the teacher in order to strengthen the learning material in the students' mind.

The repetition which is planned by the teachers to establish the learning material is called reinforcement. Reinforcement is necessary both in the teaching of the four language skills, namely : listening, speaking, reading and writing and in teaching the language features covering sounds, vocabulary and structure.

Realizing the important role of vocabulary, the writer is interested in making study in teaching vocabulary by using pictures to the fourth year students of elementary school in order to help the students master the vocabulary and to know how far the effectiveness of using pictures can improve their achievement in mastering the vocabulary.

The reason why the writer chooses pictures as a means of teaching English vocabulary is since many experts say that pictures can help the students get a clear concept to what the teacher has taught. Grazyna (1981:45-46) states that in giving a clear concept what words or structure may mean, pictures are much simpler and more vivid than a long explanation would be. Bumpas (1963: 32-33) also adds that pictures can make a learning experience more concrete, realistic or dynamic for young children.

To arouse the students' interest in vocabulary lesson is the task of the teachers. The students' attitude, motivation, interest should be considered as important factors in determining their achievement in their learning. Therefore, it is necessary for the teachers to vary their techniques in presenting the materials. One of the ways to solve this problem is by using pictures. Pictures can brighten up the classroom and bring more variety and interest into language lesson (W.R. Lee, 1981: 2).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the above background, the writer wants to make a study on the influence of using pictures on the teaching vocabulary of nouns and verbs to the fourth year students of elementary school. The problem to be answered in

this study is : "Do the students who are taught by means of pictures get higher score than those who are taught without pictures?"

1.3 Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to find out whether the use of pictures in teaching vocabulary of nouns and verbs to the fourth year students of elementary school have a positive effect on the students' achievement in mastering english vocabulary of nouns and verbs.

1.4 Significance of the Study

In line with the objective of the thesis, the significance of this study is to give some contributions in teaching vocabulary to the fourth year students of elementary school.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

In conducting this study, the writer limits her study to the fourth year students of the elementary school who take English as an optional subject for the first time, eventhough there are some who have known some English before from television, movies, as well as play groups they might have

followed. Thus, for them, English is relatively a new subject but may not be really a new language.

In this study the writer deals only with the teaching of the English vocabulary of nouns and verbs. In this thesis, nouns are limited to concrete nouns, such as "house", "chair", "umbrella", "pencil", etc, while verbs are also limited to action verbs, such as, "swim", "walk", "sing", "cry", etc since they are frequently used in daily life and considered simple enough for elementary school students as beginners in learning English.

The kinds of pictures used in this thesis are pictures of individual persons and objects, pictures of situations in which persons and objects are "in action", and series of pictures on one chart, for instance one for count nouns, one for mass nouns, one for work activities, etc.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the behavioristic theory. According to the behavioristic theory, a process of learning is considered effective if the learners can produce correct responses to the given stimuli. "Behavior is elicited by preceding stimuli" (Brown, 1987: 68). The active responses are conditioned by reinforcement (Chastain, 1974: 65). The same thing also happens in language learning, but the res-

ponses are more verbal. In teaching vocabulary to Indonesian elementary school students by using pictures, the teacher makes a condition by showing pictures as a stimulus, and then the students give response or operant which is reinforced by the teacher by nodding, smiling, or saying words like: 'good', 'right', 'excellent', etc.

1.7 Assumptions and Hypothesis

1.7.1 Assumptions

In this study the following assumptions have been made:

1. The writer assumes that English is relatively a new subject but may not be really a new language for the fourth year students of elementary school, as there are some of them who have known some English before from television, movies, as well as play groups they might have followed.
2. The writer assumes that the written tests are suitable for the students both in vocabulary and level of difficulty as in making the test, she had consulted their English teacher.
3. The writer did not give a tryout test since there were no tricky problems in the test and the test items were considered simple enough for the students (see Chapter III, section 3.3.2).

4. Both of groups, the experimental group and the control group got the same material, concrete nouns and action verbs and they also had the same teacher, that was the writer herself.
5. Both of groups, the experimental group and the control group had the same number of the students, there were 38 students for each group.

1.7.2 Hypothesis

In answering the major problem of this study, the underlying theory is formulated as follows: there is a significant different between the group who are taught by means of pictures and the group who are taught without pictures.

In order to prove whether this theory can be accepted, the writer uses two hypothesis, they are:

1.7.1 The Alternative Hypothesis

The fourth year students who are taught by means of pictures get higher score than those who are taught without pictures.

1.7.2 The Null Hypothesis

The fourth year students who are taught by means

of pictures get more or less the same score with those who are taught without pictures.

1.8 Definition

Before going on to the main part of the thesis and avoiding misunderstanding and misinterpretation, it is necessary for the writer to give a brief definition of the following key terms:

1.8.1 Vocabulary

According to Gleason (1980 : 342), "Vocabulary is a transient feature of any person's command of a language, and going with comparative ease and rapidity". In this thesis, vocabulary refers to the English vocabulary of concrete nouns and action verbs.

1.8.2 Concrete Nouns

Concrete nouns, according to House and Harman (1950: 22), are "words used to name persons, places, or things which exist as tangible and definite substances, such as 'boy', 'house', 'car', 'tree', 'book', etc. "

1.8.3 Action Verbs

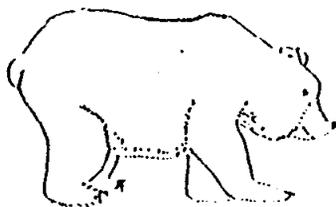
According to Warriner et al (1950: 9), "Action verbs are verbs which express actions, such as 'do', 'come', 'go', 'write', etc."

1.8.4 Picture

Picture according to Webster (1986 : 1711), is "something that by its likeness vividly suggests some other thing". In this thesis, pictures represent individual persons and objects, for example, 'a boy', 'a bear', 'a candle', etc, (see Picture 1, p.11) and situations in which persons and objects are 'in action', for example, 'a boy drawing a picture', 'a monkey climbing a tree, etc (see Picture 2, p.11). In addition to this, a series of pictures on one chart, for example, count nouns, mass nouns, work activities, etc, (see Picture 3, p.12) also used throughout this thesis (Finocchiaro, 1974:100).

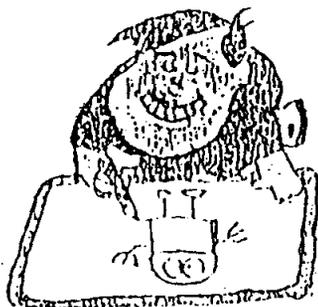
1.8.5 Influence

According to Webster (1981 : 494), the meaning of 'influence' is the power of producing effects by invisible or intangible means. In relation to this study, 'influence, refers to the extent to which pictures can effect students'



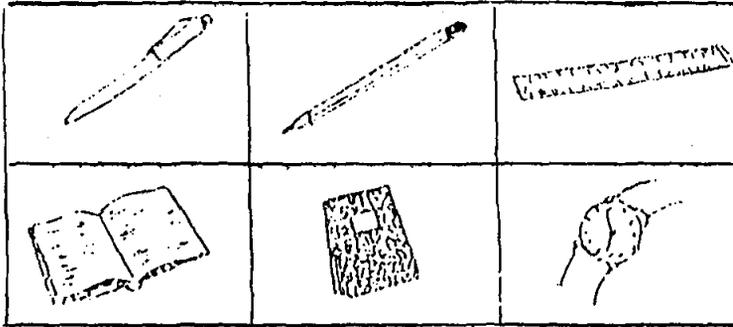
Picture 1

Individual Pictures of Persons and Objects

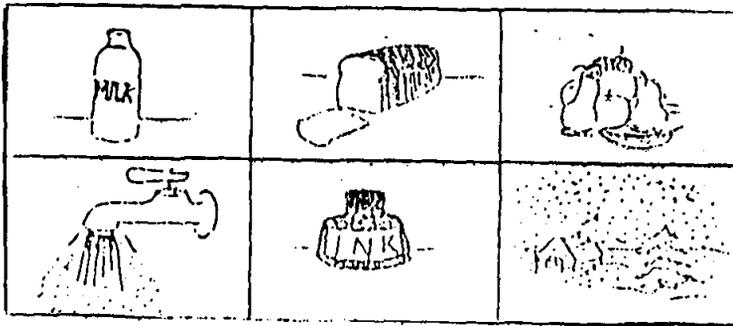


Picture 2

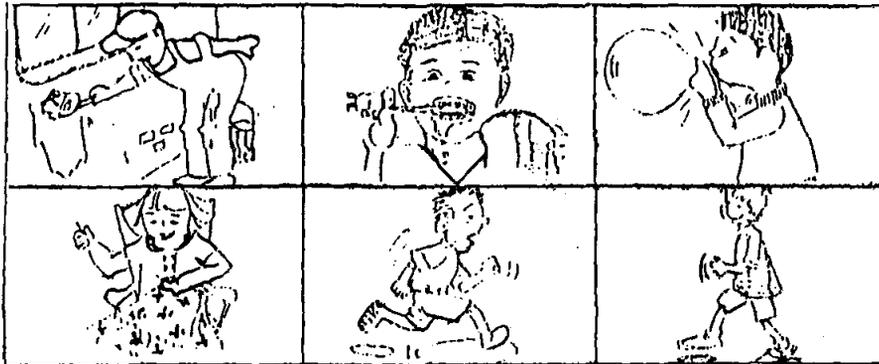
Situational Pictures of Persons and Objects



Count Nouns Chart



Mass Nouns Chart



Work Activities Chart

Picture 3

Series of Pictures

achievement in mastering the vocabulary.

1.8.6 Achievement

Achievement is the degree at which students have mastered what they have learned after a period of time. Concerning this study, achievement is represented by the scores on English vocabulary especially on concrete nouns and action verbs.

1.9 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter one is the Introduction, and chapter two is Review of Related Literature. Methodology is in chapter three while chapter four is about Research Findings. The last Chapter, chapter five, is about conclusion that consists of Summary, Conclusion and Suggestions.