

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### **A. Background of the Study**

Language plays an important role in our life. It is a means of communication. By using language, people can communicate to others. They can communicate everything such as their feelings, emotion, desire, idea, thought and so on. Without using language, it is hardly possible for people all over the world to communicate in the purpose of having friends, asking for others' help and many more.

Nowadays, English is an international language, which plays a significant role in the international communication. Business, culture, politic, tourism, commerce, science and technology, and other aspect of life are often communicated in English. For example, we can find English on the packages of food and drink in all sorts, in magazine, in scientific books, on the electrical goods, in common notice, etc. It is clear now that English is very important especially in the international communication.

One of the elements of language that cannot be separated from learning English is vocabulary. It is hard to master the four language skills without mastering or understanding a number of vocabulary, because it is fundamental in language learning. Teaching vocabulary earlier is better than teaching it later. Moreover, the general objective of English teaching in elementary school is to prepare children to have competitive value in global era and to introduce

English at early ages. Vocabulary is an element of the language that should be learnt and taught. It will be hard to master language without mastering or understanding a certain number of vocabulary. There are some experts that give explanation about the importance of vocabulary. According to Rivers (1983) in Nunan (1991: 117) that the acquisition of an adequate vocabulary is essential for successful second language use because without an extensive vocabulary, one will not be able to use the structures and function he or she may have learned for comprehensive communication.

In teaching English to children, teachers need to teach vocabulary at first. Vocabulary becomes the most important aspect in learning English. Zimmerman (1997) in Coady and Huckin (1997:5) states that vocabulary is central to language and a critical importance to the typical language learner. Therefore, students should have stocks of vocabulary to make them master a language easily.

Someone can be said mastering vocabulary if he knows the meaning of the word and knows how to put them together in the sentence (Virginia, 1983:4). Unfortunately, many people do not master vocabulary appropriately. This can be proven from the pre-observation of the fourth grade students in SD Negeri Ngabean 3 Kartasura. From the pre-observation, it is found that children get some difficulties in mastering vocabulary.

Firstly, the students get difficulties in pronouncing words correctly. Pronouncing the word correctly is an important part in teaching vocabulary because incorrect pronunciation will influence the meaning of the word.

Moreover, by pronouncing the word correctly, it can help the students remember the word longer and identify it more readily when they hear or see it. Introducing new words, the teacher should pronounce every new word correctly and carefully, and then repeat it in chorus by the class or by individual pupil. In fact, the students still get difficulties in pronouncing the word correctly.

Secondly, the students get difficulties in memorizing and grasping the meaning of the words when they are asked to mention the vocabulary. They cannot answer them perfectly. That mistake is caused by translation method in teaching vocabulary. The teacher taught vocabulary mostly by translating the English words into Indonesian at the beginning of the lesson or translating of the material containing new words or glossaries at the end. Therefore, it can be inferred that the error in this case is caused by they confuse the translation with the language use and to assume that putting across the meaning was the whole of teaching vocabulary.

Thirdly, the student's attention and motivation in learning vocabulary are decreasing. The students do not pay attention to the teacher's explanation. They are also easy to get bored in having the lesson. It can be seen from the response in answering the teacher's question. They easily give up when they get difficult exercise and the teacher never uses games, dialogues, song, and dramatization as interesting ways in delivering material.

By having conducted more observation and interview, the writer found some reasons why those problems arise. The reasons are: (1) the teacher only

gives a little time to practice pronouncing the words correctly, whereas a little time to practice cannot create accurate pronunciation, especially for the beginners. (2) The technique of the teaching vocabulary that the teacher uses seems ineffective for the students. It does not give the students great motivation to learn. In other words, students are passive in learning vocabulary.

From all statements above, it can be concluded that the teacher uses a less appropriate teaching method. Therefore, the writer proposes a method to solve those problems arise, that is inquiry- based teaching. The writer proposes inquiry- based teaching since this method implies involvement which leads to understanding. ([www.thirteen.org/endoline/concept2class/inquiry/index.html](http://www.thirteen.org/endoline/concept2class/inquiry/index.html)). The system is more student-centered, with the teacher as the facilitator of learning. In inquiry teaching, students become the active learners. Through active involvement, the learners will gain better understanding of knowledge.

Based on the explanation above, the writer is interested in implementing inquiry- based teaching to improve the students' vocabulary mastery. From this idea, the writer wants to conduct a research entitled IMPROVING THE STUDENTS' VOCABULARY MASTERY THROUGH INQUIRY- BASED TEACHING (A Class Action Research at the Fourth Year of SD Negeri Ngabean 3 Kartasura in 2009/2010 Academic Year).

## **B. Problem Statement**

Based on the background of the study, the writer formulates the problem as follows:

1. Can inquiry-based teaching improve the student's vocabulary mastery?
2. Can inquiry-based teaching improve the student's participation in learning vocabulary?

### **C.Objective of the Study**

1. The general, this study is conducted to improve the students' vocabulary mastery.
2. Specifically it is to:
  - a. To know whether inquiry-based teaching is able to improve the students' vocabulary mastery.
  - b. To know whether students will participate actively in learning vocabulary.

### **D.Limitation of the Study**

In this research, the writer limits the study to make the research easier. In this research the writer focuses on the teaching vocabulary through inquiry-based teaching at the fourth year of SD Negeri Ngabean 3 Kartasura In 2009/2010 Academic Year.

### **E.Benefit of Study**

This research result is expected to be able to give some benefits both theoretical and practical.

1. Theoretically, the finding of this research will enrich the theory of improving students' vocabulary in elementary school.
2. Practically, it is hoped that this study will provide the better choice of teaching method in improving student's vocabulary in elementary school.

#### **F. Research Paper Organization**

The writer organizes this research paper in order to make easier to understand. The writer divides this research paper into five chapters.

Chapter I is introduction that consists of the study, problem statement, limitation of the study, objective of the study, benefit of the study, and research paper organization.

Chapter II is the review of related literature which consists of previous study, vocabulary and teaching vocabulary, vocabulary mastery, the characteristic and cognitive development of children, inquiry based teaching, theoretical frame work, working hypothesis.

Chapter III is research method that consists of type research, subject of the study, object of the study, data and data resource, action procedure, technique for analyzing data, technique of collecting data.

Chapter IV is related to the data analysis and discussion the research finding related to improved the students' participation in learning vocabulary and the students were more active in process of teaching and learning vocabulary

Chapter V is conclusion and suggestion