

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Language has a central role in human's life, because the relation between language itself and human is very close. The role of language is clearly known as a tool to communicate. In doing daily activity, human always interact one each other by using language. Thus, without language ideas cannot be delivered between people. It implies the existence of language really influences human's life.

“Language reflects God in His Trinitarian character. He himself can speak, and does speak” (Poythress, 2009, p. 9). In the beginning, the Triune God created the world by using language through His Word. He just spoke and it happened. The communication shows there is relation between the Triune God through the language. As human are created as image of God, thus He also gives His character which is able to speak and does speak to human. Therefore, the relation between human as social beings also happens through language, because they use language as the tool to communicate. Language is a gift from God to be used by human, so that they can understand one another. In addition, human also use language in their relation to God, such as in prayer and worship.

In education, language also plays an important role, because teacher and students can do teaching and learning process by using language. Nowadays, English becomes one of the subjects that is taught in many schools in Indonesia. It is caused English as a lingua franca in the world, so it is needed to be learned by students. “Lingua franca is a language used for communication between people

whose first languages differ” (Holmes, 2013, pp. 82-83). Learning English will help students to communicate in global context, because it can bridge the communication among people with different native language. Holmes also adds, “English has clearly served as a language of wider communication in many pluralistic contexts, and in many multilingual countries” (Holmes, 2013, p. 83). Therefore, the existence of English can prepare and equip the students to face the future with various advancements in the world by learning it in school. Being able to understand and use English actually can help human in many more aspects. Brummelen (2008, p. 267) states that having knowledge about other language helps Christian to serve, work together and even share the gospel to people who have different native language. Therefore, knowing English is not merely for preparing self in facing the various advancements, but also as a tool to tell His gospel, because it is clearly what God asks believers to do as the great commandment.

In learning language, vocabulary becomes one of the most important elements, because it is the vital aspect in using language. Cluston says, “Vocabulary can be defined as the words of a language, including single items and phrases or chunks of several words which convey a particular meaning, the way individual words do” (Clouston, 2013, p. 2). Thus, learning English cannot be separated with vocabulary, because it is the basic and it must be related to other elements in English. As the example, in reading, writing, listening and speaking skill, vocabulary must be included in them. Hence, without having enough vocabulary knowledge, those skills will be difficult to be achieved. Vocabulary really takes important role for people in learning English.

According to Milton , “Vocabulary is not an optional or unimportant part of foreign language. Words are the building blocks of language and without them there is no language” (Milton, 2009, p. 3). Beside that, Clouston also adds, “Vocabulary is central to English language teaching because without sufficient vocabulary students cannot understand others or express their own ideas” (Clouston, 2013, p. 2). Accordingly, learning English must be started by knowing and learning vocabulary first, because everything must be related with vocabulary. Without vocabulary, nothing can be done with language. It can be seen how important the role of vocabulary is. Without having enough vocabulary, the students cannot achieve the goals in learning English. Moreover, the role of language as the tool to communicate also does not work, because ideas cannot be conveyed or communicated by using vocabulary.

According to Thornbury, actually the amount of vocabulary that learners need to know is depended on the learners’ need. But there is a threshold level as the main vocabulary that can help learners to understand the language, which is 2000 words. This amount is counted as words that native speaker usually uses in daily conversation. Beside that, 2000 words are the size that usually used in dictionary for language learners (Thornbury, 2002, p. 21). The threshold level for language learners shows the significant of having enough vocabulary in learning language. Lack of vocabulary of course will make an obstacle for language learners and block them in learning other elements of language.

Reality that happened in the classroom showed there was a gap towards the ideal condition as stated before. During observation in grade VII-B sekolah Kristen Makedonia, researcher found that the students felt difficult to understand when

mentor teacher explained the lesson using English. He had to translate directly into Indonesian so that the students really understood the explanation. Beside that, the students did not know the meaning of words in English, even the common words. So mentor teacher usually asked the students to find the meaning of those words in dictionary first. After researcher taught the students, researcher also found the same problem faced by mentor teacher towards the students. Researcher used English during the teaching, but the students did not understand what the researcher explained, so researcher had to translate directly into Indonesian. Researcher did simple interview with the students, in fact some of them never learned English when they were in Elementary School, while the other students only learned English in certain grades, not fully during in Elementary School. But few students who graduated from Makedonia had learned English fully when they were in Elementary School. Then researcher also interviewed mentor teacher with some questions based on the students' problem. In fact, mentor teacher also said that the students were lack of vocabulary. In addition, researcher also could see from reflection that the students wrote. Almost all of the students said that their difficulty in learning English is in vocabulary part (Appendix 4). Then, researcher also gave the students vocabulary test, which was related to form, meaning, and use of vocabulary. There were only three out of thirty students who passed the minimum criteria score (Appendix 6). From the facts that have been found during the learning process in the classroom, it could be seen that the students were lack of vocabulary.

By those facts, researcher tried to find the appropriate solution towards the students' problem. After seeing the students' condition and characteristics, then having discussion with mentor teacher, finally researcher decided to apply the use

of teaching media flashcards to improve the students' vocabulary knowledge. According to Komachali & Khodareza, "A flashcard is a cardboard consisting of a word, a sentence, or a simple picture on it. Flashcards are useful for drilling new letters, syllables, words, and other information" (Komachali & Khodareza, 2012, p. 137). Haycraft also stated that flashcards can be used for consolidating vocabulary, they are simple and effective (Haycraft, 1986). The use of flashcards give benefits which can help the students to learn new vocabulary. As God has given innate capacity for every human to learn something, so the students also should be able to learn English, moreover by using learning media that can help and support them in learning new vocabulary.

Based on research that has been done by Komachali and Khodareza to Iranian students about the use of flashcards to improve vocabulary knowledge also shows that the use of flashcards can improve the students' vocabulary knowledge. The analysis result from the students' pretests and posttests showed that the use of flashcards in learning vocabulary led to a higher level of vocabulary improvement. The result of the study indicated a significant difference compared to traditional teaching method (Komachali & Khodareza, 2012, p. 142). Beside that, there is also finding by Leonardus, Sada, & Bunau about the use of flashcards to improve the vocabulary of students grade VIII-C in one of schools in Pontianak, West Borneo. The students are lack of vocabulary. After using flashcards in teaching vocabulary to the students, there is improvement of the students' vocabulary. This was proved by the result of the mean score 59.210 for the first cycle to 74.210 for the second cycle (Leonardus, Sada, & Bunau, 2018). Those two findings show the effectiveness of the use of flashcards to improve students' vocabulary knowledge.

Human are created differently with other creation. God has given human mind to think so that they are be able to learn new thing. As well as the students, they must be able to learn English even it is hard for them. Teacher is the one who has an important role to make the students understand the lesson. Using learning media is one of ways that can help students achieve the goals. According to Highet (1950) and Rubin (1985) cited in Brummelen (2009) is stated that one of the roles of teacher is being an artist. The role of teacher as an artist concerns to the importance of creativity in teaching strategy and getting the students' response or engagement during the learning process. The students will be helped to understand the material through the creativity of the teacher. Flashcards are learning media which emit teacher's creativity, because they are made by some criteria which aim to attract the students' attention so that they can be easier to understand the new vocabulary.

After doing discussion with mentor, researcher decided to use flashcards to help the students in improving their vocabulary knowledge, and researcher conducted a research about students' vocabulary in Sekolah Kristen Makedonia with the title of the research ” **THE USE OF FLASHCARDS TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE OF GRADE VII-B IN SEKOLAH KRISTEN MAKEDONIA NGABANG**”.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the background of study, the research questions are:

1. Does the use of flashcards improve students' vocabulary knowledge of grade VII-B?
2. How does the use of flashcards affect students' vocabulary knowledge of grade VII-B?

1.3 Research Purposes

The purposes of this research are:

1. To see whether the use of flashcards improves students' vocabulary knowledge of grade VII-B.
2. To find out how the use of flashcards affects students' vocabulary knowledge of grade VII-B.

1.4 Explanation of Terms

1.4.1 Vocabulary

Vocabulary can be defined as the words of a language, including single items and phrases or chunks of several words which convey a particular meaning, the way individual words do (Clouston, 2013, p. 2). According to Linse, vocabulary can be defined as groups of words in language that are known by people and covers all types of words, such as noun, verb, adjective, adverb, and preposition, etc (Linse, 2005, p. 121).

1.4.2 Flashcards

Flashcards are one of teaching media used in learning process by the researcher. "A flashcard is a cardboard consisting of a word, a sentence, or a simple picture on it. Flashcards are useful for drilling new letters, syllables, words, and other information", (Komachali & Khodareza, 2012, p. 137). With the same idea, Arsyad (2002, p. 119) cited in Bahrudin (2015, p. 97) states that flashcard is a small card consists of picture, text, or symbols that can help the students to memorize the materials related to the picture. It means flashcard is set of cards with picture or only cards with words which can be handled easily by the teacher.