

CHAPTER I

Introduction

In this chapter the writer explains about background of the problem, research question, the objective of the study, theoretical framework, hypotheses, the significance of the study, limitation and scope, definition of key terms, and organization of the thesis.

1.1. Background of the Problem

Nowadays, learning English becomes one of our needs because in this era English is an international language. Many people have used English as their second language. In this globalization era, learning English is very important, especially in Indonesia where English is still a foreign language. When learning a language, people should be good in four language skills to have good in communication. There are four language skills; Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing which are grouped as Receptive and Productive skills. Listening and Reading skills are usually called Receptive skill, while Speaking and Writing are called Productive skill. Both receptive and productive skills should be possessed by someone who wants to have good command in English. (adopted from: The 4 Language Skills retrieved from www.englishclub.com/learn-english/language-skills.htm on Monday, October 31 2016) Reading is one of the important skills because reading is a key to success. Through reading, people will get new and important knowledge.

Linse (2006) stated that reading can be for pleasure or getting information. Some people believe that reading can open many different doors.

Even reading is important; seemingly children's reading skill in Indonesia is still low. According to the report from Kompas newspaper, Indonesian's reading skill is very low, especially in elementary schools. The International Association for the Evaluation Achievement also ranked Indonesian children in reading skill at the bottom four from the 45 countries in the world (posted on Wednesday, October 28 2009). The same news reported by merdeka.com which is said that Indonesian children are in the 60th position over the world for their reading ability (posted on Thursday, April 21 2016).

In the fifth semester, the writer had a chance to have observation in an elementary school because the lecturer assigned her to do an observation for her class project. The writer went to the second and fourth grades. In second graders, the writer found out some students have weak reading skill, they had difficulty in reading texts. The students could sound out and repeat the words that their teacher modeled, but when it came to individual reading, the students could not read the words. They could not read the words by themselves. For example, the word cat, the students tended to read the letter 'c' as /c/ sound, not /k/ sound. Because of misreading, it leads to misunderstanding the meaning of words and it becomes the concern of the writer.

Another chance, the writer observed another private school in her town; she found out that the students who are in grades 2 have same problem in reading. Based on the researcher's observations and report above, the writer thinks that reading skill of the students needs to be improved. In her observations, she also found out the similar teaching technique that used by the teachers from the writer's first and second observation. The teaching technique used by the teachers was whole language. Whole language is a concept which includes the use of real literature and writing in the context of meaningful, functional, and cooperative experiences in order to develop in students' motivation and interest in the process of learning (Bergeon, 1990). The writer thinks that this technique might be one the cause of reading problem for grade 2 students.

There are many teaching techniques that can be used for improving students reading skills. Through this study the writer would like to propose "phonics instruction". In phonics instruction, the students are taught to break parts of the words by the sound. Phonics instruction purpose is to teach beginning readers that printed letters represent speech sounds heard in words (Heilman, 2002). Through phonics instruction, a young learner teacher can help the children to recognize the symbol. Moats (2001) stated written symbols represent a specific sound or phoneme. English is an alphabetic language consisting of 26 letters. These 26 letters combine into over 200 spelling patterns to represent 44 phonemes or sounds in English language. Sometimes children will get frustrated when they try to decode English

words. For example, the letter 'c' is used to decode /k/ in 'cat' and /s/ in 'cereal'. However in Indonesia, the symbol 'c' is always used to indicate /c/ sound. In word '*cuaca*' both written and spoken has same letter and sound. Therefore there is phonics instruction to help children decoding the words.

Phonics instruction is better given to beginning readers; first or second graders because according to Chall (1983), in his reading stages, stated students who are in the first and second grade are still in the reading stage 1 which they are still in the initial reading level. In the initial reading level, children are still learning relation between letter sounds and printed words. This is also in line with the main purpose of phonics instruction that students are taught to know the relation between letter and sound. In this study, the writer would like to suggest the teachers another technique of teaching reading which is phonics instruction.

1.2. Research Question

- Is there any significant difference between reading accuracy of the second grade elementary students who are taught with phonics instruction and students who are taught whole language?

1.3. The Objective of the Study

Based on the research question above, this study is conducted to find out whether the students who are taught phonic instructions have greater improvement than the students who are taught whole language.

1.4. Theoretical Framework

Reading is a set of skills that involves making sense and deriving meaning from printed word. Teaching children how to derive meaning as well as analyze and synthesize what they have read is essential part of reading process (Linse, Caroline 2006).

Phonic Instruction is the teaching of sounds as part of decoding. “The purpose of phonics instruction is to teach beginning readers that printed letters represent speech sounds heard in words” (Heilman, 2002)

Whole Language Instruction is an approach in which teaching a language using a real literature and writing in the context of meaningful, functional, and cooperative experiences in order to develop in students’ motivation and interest in the process of learning (Bergeron, 1990). It means while reading, the students focus on the context or meaning of the story.

1.5. Hypotheses

Ha : There is a significant difference between reading accuracy of second grade elementary students who are taught phonics instruction and students who are taught whole language.

Ho : There is NO significant difference between reading accuracy of second grade elementary students who are taught phonics instruction and students who are taught whole language.

1.6. The Significance of the Study

The researcher hopes that this study will inform the teachers of young learners about phonemic awareness instruction. Teachers who teach young learner will know another alternative in teaching technique to teach reading.

1.7. Limitation and Scope

This research is limited to the subject who is elementary students' grade 2 and the techniques used are phonics instruction and whole language. The writer limited the phonics that was going to be used in this study. The writer only used "th" and "ch" digraphs as the material of the study.

1.8. Definition of Key Terms

- **Reading**

Reading is a set of skills that involves making sense and deriving meaning from printed word (Linse, Caroline 2006).

- **Accuracy**

Accuracy means reading a word without making mistakes (Maurer, 2011). For this study, accuracy will be defined as the ability to read with correct pronunciation.

- **Phonics Instruction**

Phonics Instruction is the teaching of sounds as part of decoding. Sounds or letters that are associated with specific nouns (Linse, Caroline 2006).

- **Whole Language Instruction**

Whole Language is an approach in which teaching language using a real literature and writing in the context of meaningful, functional, and cooperative experiences in order to develop in students' motivation and interest in the process of learning (Bergeron, 1990).

1.9. Organization of the Thesis

This study consists of five chapters. The first chapter covers the background of the problem, research question, objective of the study, theoretical framework, hypotheses, significance of the study, limitation and scope, definition of key terms, and organization of the study. The second chapter covers the review of related literature and the previous studies. The third chapter discusses about the research method of this study which includes research design, variable of research, subjects, instruments of research, procedure of data collection, and technique of data analysis. The fourth chapter is about data analysis and findings and discussion and the last chapter, the fifth chapter is about the conclusion and writer's suggestions.