

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents introduction to the present research. It consists of research background, research questions, aims of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, clarification of related terms and the organization of the paper.

### 1.1 Research Background

Literacy nowadays is frequently discussed especially in the education system. Basically, literacy is defined as the ability of reading and writing (Oxford University, 2008), which sets the students up to the further learning process. Meanwhile, Ontario Education (2004) asserts that literacy is a learning gateway. It is because “literacy is integral to effective learning across all curriculum areas and across all learning phases” (Department of Education and the Arts, Queensland Government, 2006; 1).

Furthermore, Sahetapy (2012) argues that literacy as the heart of learning process also needs to be taught as early as possible which aims to make the education better, especially in Indonesia. Regarding the importance of literacy, especially to young learners, teachers as the educators should be concerned with their students’ literacy skills and provide the way to develop their literacy skills well.

One possible way is through the use of picture books in teaching process, as Paquette (2004; 156) supports that “teacher who shares quality picture books with young children is promoting literacy in the fullest sense of the word”. In addition, through picture books children can learn

Dewi Agustin, 2013

*The Use of Picture Books in Teaching Literacy to Young Learners*

Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia | repository.upi.edu | perpustakaan.upi.edu

many skills of literacy include reading, learning vocabulary, comprehension and concepts about prints, as De Malendez & Sanchez (2007) state, and also phonemic awareness, fluency, and comprehension, as Hibbing & Rankin-Erickson (2003; as cited in Draper, 2010) report.

Moreover, studies of picture books have been conducted by many researchers. One of them was done by Seplocha & Strasser (2007) who revealed that picture books can support children's literacy by engaging children in activities that encourage the use of expressive language, phonological awareness and high-level thinking which is critical for their development in reading and writing.

In addition, another study by Bland (2010) discovered that picture books are the best training for literacy. His finding suggests that children are able to interpret the response of the stories in picture books, form the ideas and construct the meaning of the stories through pictures.

Although picture books have been reported to help literacy to young learners, research on the use of picture books in Indonesian context is still rare. Thus, this study attempts to fill the gap in the research area of teaching literacy. Moreover, considering those previous studies and the importance of literacy in our life, this study is aimed at investigating picture books as one of the supporting ways to develop children's ability in reading and writing skills and identify students' responses toward picture books. This study focuses on literacy aspects, such as reading engagement, comprehension, vocabulary knowledge, concepts about prints, phonemic awareness, fluency and aspects of writing.

## 1.2 Research Questions

The questions of this study are formulated as follows:

Dewi Agustin, 2013

*The Use of Picture Books in Teaching Literacy to Young Learners*

Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia | repository.upi.edu | perpustakaan.upi.edu

- a) To what extent can picture books help young learners develop literacy skills?
- b) What are the students' responses toward the use of picture books in developing literacy?

### **1.3 Aims of Study**

Based on the research questions above, this study aims to investigate:

- a) To what extent picture books can help young learners in developing their literacy.
- b) The students' responses toward the use of picture books in learning literacy.

### **1.4 Scope of Study**

This study focuses on investigating the extent to which the use of picture books help young learners to improve their literacy, especially reading and writing skills and how students respond toward the use of picture books in learning literacy. In addition, the research site was conducted in the respondent's house during English private course. The participants in this study were three young learners: two 5<sup>th</sup> grade students and one 3<sup>rd</sup> grade student of elementary school.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The results of this study are expected to be significant theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the results of the study are expected to enhance literacy development in English to young learners and to provide a beneficial reference for further research on teaching literacy to young learners.

Meanwhile, practically, the results of the study are expected to provide an alternative technique for the teachers in teaching literacy; reading and writing skills to young learners. The picture books aim to modify the use of regular textbooks in the learning process and increase

students' interest toward reading and writing. Furthermore, this study is also expected to give the students a chance to develop literacy, especially their reading and writing skills.

Finally, the findings of this study are expected to lead to the development of human resources in Indonesia. It is because Indonesian people need some better ways to improve the educational system throughout the development of literacy. This study proposed picture books as one of the better ways to support young learners in developing their literacy. By letting children love to read and write a book, this nation will move forward in the next days. Therefore, the school can make a special literacy program which uses picture books in the learning process.

## 1.6 Clarification of Related Terms

In this research there are some terms that need to be clarified further to avoid misunderstanding and misconception and they are as follows:

- a) *Picture Books* are illustration books which are the verbal (written) and visual (illustrative) texts collaborate to construct the story. Both of them work together interpedently (Goldstone, 2002).
- b) *Literacy*, is the ability to read and write as well as speak and listen. These skills develop together (Weigel and Martin, 2008).
- c) *Young Learners* are children in age of 5-12 years old. (Rixon, 1999)

## 1.7 The Organization of Paper

The research paper is presented in five chapters:

### Chapter I (Introduction)

Dewi Agustin, 2013

*The Use of Picture Books in Teaching Literacy to Young Learners*

Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia | repository.upi.edu | perpustakaan.upi.edu

This chapter consists of background of the study, research questions, aims of the study, scope of the study, significance of study, clarification of related terms and the organization of paper.

## **Chapter II (Theoretical Foundation)**

This chapter presents the theories that are related to the topic of the study. It includes the definition of literacy; the importance of literacy, definitions of picture books, young learners; the definition of young learners, young learners' characteristics in learning new language, teaching literacy through picture books to young learners and some previous studies of the use of picture books in developing literacy to young learners.

## **Chapter III (Research Method)**

This chapter contains the research method, which includes the research questions, research design, research site and participants, data collection and data analysis.

## **Chapter IV (Findings and Discussion)**

This chapter presents the findings and discussions of the study.

## **Chapter V (Conclusions and Suggestions)**

This chapter describes the conclusions of the study and suggestion for further study.