CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the general idea of the present study. The information covers the background of the study, the problems of the study, the purposes, significance and scope of the study. The clarification of the terms used and the outline for the organization of this thesis are also underlined.

1.1 Background of the study

Nowadays technology advances have been growing very fast. They can come many advantages in many areas including in today’s educational settings. In language teaching, the use of computer-based materials for language teaching often referring to CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) has been known since 1950s (Beatty, 2003, Egbert, 2005). It is constantly undergoing change in more sophisticated both in their performance and their functions (Beatty, 2003; Dudeney and Hockly, 2007) as a result of technological innovation creating opportunities to revise old findings, to conduct new research and to challenge established beliefs about the ways in which teaching and learning can be carried out to both with and without a teacher (Beatty, 2003).

Recently, in creating a motivating and successful environment for learning by using computer, the term “edutainment” as the integration of “education” and
“entertainment” has been evolved from the definition of educational technology. It becomes greatly popular and keeps growing fast since early 1990s (Kazanci & Okan, 2009). The edutainment software which promises the learner with cognitively challenging, attractive material ((Kazanci & Okan, 2009; Zin & Zain, 2010) is widely expected to be able to make the process of learning is going to be colorful and fun in such a way that students get so lots of information in the fun learning that they do not realize they are learning at the same time.

However, the effect of edutainment software which is adapted in EFL classroom still remains and concerns both educators and parents (Kazanci & Okan, 2009). A number of empirical studies have been conducted, which either support (Wood, 2001; Chapelle, 2001; Sato & Suzuki, 2010) or oppose (Olson et al., 2001; Setzer and Monke, 2001) the use of edutainment software in the classroom. Resnick (2004) supporting Olson (2001) and Setzer & Monke (2001) argued that the edutainment as artificial sweetener to make learning become palatable to children. Conversely, Zin & Zain (2010) gave evidence that edutainment software can increase students understanding toward the topic that has been taught and students’ interest in teaching and learning process. Moreover, Alemi (2010) supports Wood (2001) that educational games can help learners to expand vocabulary which is a central component of verbal comprehension (Cheng Sieh, 2008; Ryan in Schmitt et al., 2001; Thornbury, 2002) and has positive correlation with later literacy development in both first language and foreign or second language (Neuman & Dickinson, 2011; Brown, 2010; Pikulski & Templeton, 2004; Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Alderson, 2000).
Considering there are still a few studies in the field of edutainment software, especially related to the young learners’ vocabulary, thus the present study focuses on teaching vocabulary using edutainment software. This study uses *i tutor.net* since the edutainment software is a comprehensive multimedia learning package consisting of animated lessons and interactive activities. The software which was designed by a Singapore company and approved by *e-ASEAN endorsed project* is distributed in franchise system by a private company having bought the license to use in Indonesia. The software is aimed at equipping learners with more academic knowledge, nurture them into creative thinking and present fun learning which makes the students especially young learners happy. It promises children are being motivated and involved in doing many activities since it contains all kinds of language skills and aspects; speaking, reading, listening, writing, grammar, and vocabulary. Hopefully the finding of this study will provide a better insight especially for teachers of young learners in teaching vocabulary to their students through edutainment software and a useful consideration for policy making in the school to improve English education in the school.

1.2 Research Questions

Connected with what has been discussed above, the questions in this study are formulated as follows:

1. How is *i tutor.net* as edutainment software implemented in teaching vocabulary to young learners?
2. What are the responses of the learners toward *i tutor.net* as edutainment software?

### 1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study are formulated based on the problems investigated. This study intends:

a. To portray what happens in the classroom when *i tutor.net* as edutainment software is implemented in teaching English vocabulary to young learners in primary school context.

b. To find out the responses of the learners toward *i tutor.net* as edutainment software.

### 1.4 Significance of the Study

The result of this study will provide information on the use of edutainment software in teaching vocabulary to young learners and the benefits and barriers of using the software. It will contribute some aspects as follows:

a. The information can be used to support the previous theory about the use of edutainment software in teaching young learners and provide new information in teaching vocabulary to young learners through edutainment software.
b. Practically, the information will be valuable for English teachers as this study proves practical guidance on how to use edutainment software in the classroom.

c. Additionally, the result of the study can be useful for policy makers in school to improve the school policy, primarily about the implementation of edutainment software in the extracurricular activity.

1.5 The Scope of the Study

This study explores *i tutor.net* as edutainment software used to teach vocabulary to the learners. Nineteen learners of third grade of *a pilot elementary school with international standard (RSDBI)* in Kalijati, Subang are involved in this study which focuses on teaching vocabulary to young learners through *i tutor.net* as edutainment software and learners’ responses towards the software.

1.6 Terminology

There are three key terms used in this study; edutainment software, vocabulary, and young learner which will be briefly defined below.

The first is ‘edutainment software,’ which is education that has been placed within the framework of entertainment so children could enjoy what they learn with a combination of many mediums (sound, animation, video, text, and images) by simply using a computer mouse to point and click on a particular picture, word, or button;
and stories as well as information that will come alive on a computer screen (Gross, 2003).

The second term is ‘vocabulary’ which is the knowledge of words and word meanings (Diamond and Gutlohn, 2006). The last is ‘young learners’. This term covers a wide age range which can be anybody from the age of five to the age of twelve (Rixon, 1999). For the purpose of this study, young learners are defined as children between the ages of about 8 years old to 9 years old that are in the third grade of elementary school students.

1.7 Organization of the Study

This thesis is organized in five chapters. The first chapter gives a general description of the introduction to the topic of the research. It includes the research questions, the research aims, scope and limitation of the study, significance of the study. The second chapter describes theoretical framework covering the theories and references for this study. The third chapter deals with the methodology that will be used to conduct the research. It presents the participants, research design, and the procedure of data collection and analysis. The fourth chapter describes research finding and discussion. The last chapter presents the conclusion of the thesis and offers some suggestions for further research.
1.8 Closing Remark

This chapter has presented the introduction of the whole study which includes background of the study, the research questions, the research aims, scope and limitation of the study, significance of the study and organization of this paper. The following chapter will present the theoretical foundation that frames the study.