I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the background of the problem which includes the reasons for conducting the research, the problems, the objective, uses, scope of the research, and definition of terms.

1.1. Background of the Problem

Vocabulary is an important element of language. Therefore, it is important for the teacher to choose a good technique when teaching vocabulary in the class. Therefore, students can use vocabulary based on the context when they are practicing a language.

When learners learn a new language, they should have enough vocabulary in order to make use of their language skills i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing for communicating ideas. Wolter (2002) examined the relationship between language proficiency and word associations and concluded that the result being statistically significant though not totally convincing, there is still a relationship between these two.
The higher level of achieving vocabularies for students, the better students understand a language.

Today, the teacher should help the students to learn the vocabularies by finding the meaning of vocabulary by themselves. On the other hand, Ko (2012) L2 learners could not make intelligent guesses in the same way as native speakers due to their lack of vocabulary knowledge or general proficiency level. Also, a given context often does not provide sufficient clues to L2 readers. Learners need to know the surrounding words well in order to guess words correctly. Teacher should make the students understand the vocabulary in the context and make the students use the vocabularies when they are practicing the language skills. It makes the teacher choose a good technique when the teacher is teaching so that all aspect of language can be covered and understood by the students.

Nation (2005) states that discovering learning burden in teaching vocabulary can help the teacher know what should be involved in learning vocabulary. Furthermore, he defines the aspects that should be involved in learning vocabulary. The first aspect involved in learning vocabulary is meaning which is related to form and its meaning, concept and referents, and word association. The second is form which is related to spoken form (pronunciation and spelling) written form and word part. And the last is use which is related to grammatical functions, collocation and constraint of use. The teacher should consider these three aspect when teaches vocabulary in the classroom.
Baleghizadeh & Naeim (2011) states that a good example of a meaningful technique, on the other hand, is “inference” or “guessing” techniques where learners are asked to infer, or at other time, guess the meaning of a certain word in a context, using any clues provided before or after that word in the context or even any other strategies (e.g. examining the root, prefixes, or suffixes) which might be helpful to arrive at the meaning of the unknown word) or we might use the technique that allow the students to find their own word to be learned. Teacher just lead them by using a word as a core-word then asks the students to develop it based on their knowledge.

Nation (1990) points out that if the teacher’s aim is to get the learners to remember the word form and its meaning, then it is useful to attract the learners’ attention and to encourage them to make an effort. When a teacher is able to make an impression and bring the students’ experience about language knowledge in teaching learning process, students can learn and develop it based on their own interest. It will make the students easier to remember the materials that have been discussed in the classroom. And also it will make the students get higher level of vocabulary achievement. Because vocabulary is language knowledge, it will be a possibility if the students learn based on their own interesting. They will develop their ability to capture many vocabularies unconsciously not only in teaching learning process but also in their daily activity.

Nowadays, English is one of the subjects that is taught to young learners in kindergarten. Harmer (2007) states that teachers of young learners need to spend time understanding how their students think and operate. They need to be able to pick up on
their students’ current interests so that they can use them to motivate the children. Therefore, it is a challenge for teachers of young learners to think creatively in teaching vocabulary to find activities which provide a fun and enjoyable situation, so that the learners are able to understand the materials easily.

One of many ways to make young learners interested to learn vocabulary is by using media. Flashcard may be one of the alternative media that can be used by the teacher. A flashcard or flash card is a set of cards bearing information, as words or numbers, on either or both sides, used in classroom drills or in private study. Flashcards can bear vocabulary, historical dates, formulas or any subject matter that can be learned via a question and answer format. Flashcards are widely used as a learning drill to aid memorization by way of spaced repetition.

Based on the cases above, the researcher tries to find out how far flashcard, as an instructional media, can increase students’ vocabulary achievement. The vocabularies are tested in the kindergarten are daily objects. It is hoped that by using flashcard the students are able to memorize and reproduce the words they have learned easier than by memorizing a list of words.

1.2. Research Question

Based on the problem, the writer would like to formulate the research questions as follow:
1. Is there any significant increase of students’ vocabulary achievement after being taught using flashcard at Little Elephant Kindergarten School Bandar Lampung?

1.3. Objective of the Research

In line with the research questions above the objectives of the research are to find out:

1. Whether the use of flashcard can increase students’ vocabulary achievement.

1.4. Uses of the Research

The findings of the study are expected to be beneficial for both theoretically and practically:

1. Theoretically

The results of this research are expected to support the existing theories about vocabulary and learning media in this case is flashcard media that will be discussed in chapter 2.

2. Practically

The result of the research are hoped to be practically beneficial for students, teacher, and school. Those are explained as follows:

a. Students: this research hopefully can help students in improving their vocabulary achievement.
b. Teachers: this research hopefully can be the consideration in teaching vocabulary and can inform the teachers about the process and benefit of flashcard media.

c. School: this research hopefully can be consideration of vocabulary aspect of school in determining the strategy for running the successful English learning.

1.5. Scope of the Research

The research is focused on finding which how far flashcard could be used to increase students’ achievement. The students’ achievement in learning vocabulary is tested using a pre-test and post-test to know the students’ achievement before and after they were given a treatment. The vocabulary was focused on content words especially in concrete noun. This research was conducted in the kindergarten students at Little Elephant in class B that consisted of 15 students with the same range of ages about 4-5 years old.

1.6. Definition of Terms

In order to specify the topic of the research, the researcher provides some definition of terms related to the research. These are the definition of some terms which are related to the research:
a. Vocabulary is a list of words that included in part of speech which has meaning when it is used to construct a sentence to express human ideas in order to be understood by other people.

b. Teaching vocabulary is a process to make the students understand the meaning of word in different language and use it in appropriate context by using some kind of techniques.

c. Flashcard is a media for process teaching and learning that consist of two sides. One side is for picture and one side is for the word.