I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Vocabulary acquisition crucial in any language acquirement, English of course included. As Harmer 1993: 153 says that, if language structures make up the skeleton of language, then it is vocabulary that provides the vital organs and the flesh. Vocabulary includes collection of words. The words are known not only as individual words, but also as a group of words that have meaning. According to Hatch & Brown (1995), vocabulary is the list of words that speakers of a particular language use. By ‘words’ in this context, we do not mean only items consisting of one word but also strings of words which together form one lexical item.

By having a lot of vocabularies, the students can express more idea. As, Rivers (1970:462) stated that it would be impossible to learn a language without vocabulary. Vocabulary is the content of language. When we want to construct a sentence to express our idea, we need to know adequate vocabularies that are able to represent our idea. If we do not have any vocabularies in certain language, of course we will not be able to speak that language.
Vocabulary achievement is an important element in second language (L2) acquisition. By learning new words, students can increase their listening, speaking, reading and writing vocabularies and can improve comprehension and production in L2. Nation (2001:27) distinguishes between receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge: “Essentially, receptive vocabulary use involves recognizing the form of a word while listening or reading and retrieving meaning. Productive vocabulary use involves wanting to express a meaning through speaking or writing and retrieving and producing the appropriate spoken or written word form”. Discussions of what it means to know a word (e.g. Cameron, 2001) also commonly refer to three aspects of vocabulary knowledge: form, meaning and use.

In reality, teaching English to elementary student is not easy. There are many problems occur during the process since English is a new language for them. The less of English vocabulary and the lack of teaching techniques variation in teaching English vocabulary become the prominent problems. Moreover sometimes, the young learners do not have enough attention to learn English.

Vocabularies that are commonly taught in elementary school classified into contents words included concrete nouns and action words. It is the vocabulary that should be mastered by the student at the beginner level and it is also used in everyday conversation. But, most of elementary school students are lacking of vocabulary and cannot use English in their daily life. Moreover most of them fail to reach the goal of the curriculum target. As, students graduated from Elementary
School have to master about 600 to 750 words in order to be able to use English both in spoken and written language. Therefore, it is necessary for the teachers to find out certain method or media to improve students’ vocabulary. This method or media is required to attract the students’ attention to learn and motivate the students to develop their own vocabulary.

Allen (1983: 12) states that in classes where no one language is known by the entire student, the teacher needs particular skill. The teacher must provide definition in English, using words the class can understand vocabulary lessons for ‘ the first stage of English instruction use flash card for showing many meanings”. Furthermore, Allen (1983:52) adds that “Language teachers are responsible for creating conditions which encourage vocabulary expansion, and well-chosen game can help the students acquire English word”.

Media that can be used by the teacher to improve the students’ vocabulary is through flashcard. Flashcard, as visual aids is an interesting picture that can activate the learners in teaching and learning process. The presence of visual aids is valuable, especially flashcard help the students in memorizing the English words. By using flashcard, the students will have better learning experience. Hamalik (1980:45) states that learning experience can be acquired through substitute models or pictures. This also means that in learning something, the students get experience not only through real objects but also through substitute models, or pictures of things. The colorful picture can attract students’ attention so they are eager to learn. Kusniah (2002) conducted the research entitled “Teaching
Vocabulary using Flashcard”. She conducted the pupil’s achievements in vocabulary mastery by using teaching methods which emphasized on flashcard as a media. The result showed that by using flashcard the students of elementary school students could achieve the target vocabulary well.

So the writer assumes that flashcard will be appropriate to be applied in classroom activity. Based on the fifth grade year student curriculum, here is more specified on content word included concrete nouns and action words. These words divided into two topics, things at home and things at school. This vocabulary chosen since they are commonly used in everyday conversation for elementary level. It is hoped that by using flashcard the students will be able to memorize and reproduce the words they have learned easier than by memorizing a list of words.

1.2 Research Problem

Considering the background above, the writer formulates the problem of the research as stated below:

Can flashcard be used to increase elementary students’ vocabulary achievement dealing with noun, verb, adjective?

1.3 Objective

As stated in the background and the formulation of problem, the researcher states the objective of the research is to find out whether flashcard can be
used to increase students’ achievement on vocabulary dealing with noun, verb, and adjective?

1.4 Uses

The writer described the uses of the research as below:

1. Theoretically, the result of the research is expected to give information to the teacher whether flashcard is applicable or not to increase the students’ vocabulary achievement.

2. Practically, the result of the research can be used as an alternative for the teacher as media to improve teacher’s performance in teaching vocabulary.

1.5 Scope

The researcher conducted the research for three weeks at the fifth year of Madrasah Mathla’ul Anwar SG Bandar Lampung. There were two classes as the sample of this research which consist of 37 students each class. This research focused on teaching English vocabulary concerning the concrete noun by using flashcard. The materials were taken based on the 2004 Basic Course Outline (BCO/GBPP) of English for Elementary School. The source of data of the research was taken from two classes, one as experimental class and other as tryout class. The researcher used one pretest, a set of treatments and a posttest to find out the increases of students’ achievement.