CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background of the Study

According to Shepherd (1976: 39) among the three language components (grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation), vocabulary was one of the most important aspects of language development. Related to this, Taylor (1990: ix) stated that vocabulary was important in language teaching and learning. The significance of vocabulary was confirmed by Finocchiaro (1969: 8). She stated that in order for people to be able to listen, speak, read and write they needed sufficient vocabulary. In addition to this, vocabulary development was the important area that would improve people's reading ability (Hillman, 1990; Day, 1993; Gebhard, 1996; Nation & Coady, 1998 in Nation, 1990: 116).

From the theory above, the writer concluded that vocabulary as one of the three language components gave significant influence and important contribution in language teaching and learning. Thus, it could not be denied that vocabulary was the heart of language teaching and learning (Carter & Mc. Carthy, 1988: vii).

On the other hand, the practice of language teaching and learning at schools showed that reading, speaking and grammatical competence had received more portions than vocabulary. This opinion was supported by Santa Perawan Maria institution English teachers who shared their experiences in a meeting conducted at jl. Jaya Giri No. 21 in Malang from January 9th to 12th, 2003. Here, the teachers shared their teaching experiences, saying that they had given much

effort to improve their students' reading, speaking and grammar achievement but less attention to develop students' vocabulary mastery because teaching vocabulary had been included in teaching reading. Thus, during the sharing, the teachers spent more time to discuss how to improve their students' reading, speaking and grammatical competence than vocabulary mastery. In addition, they said that they had no time to spend to teach vocabulary by using various techniques.

Related to the discussion above, the writer concluded that there was a gap between the theory and practice of language teaching and learning. The theory said that vocabulary was the heart of language teaching and learning because it played important roles to develop students' four basic aspects of communication: listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, the real practice of language teaching and learning at school paid less attention to vocabulary development.

As a result, many students felt that English was very difficult to learn. This opinion was supported by the writer's three years teaching experiences (January 2000 – July 2003) in Stella Maris Junior High School in Surabaya. Many Stella Maris Junior High School students complained that English was very difficult to learn because there were so many vocabulary items to remember. Therefore, the writer wanted to conduct this study to help both teachers and students in vocabulary teaching and learning by applying mapping and acronyms as techniques to teach and to learn vocabulary items.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

As stated in the background of the study that vocabulary was important in English teaching and learning process, the problem of this study is:

Do students who are taught vocabulary with mapping and acronyms obtain higher vocabulary achievement than those who are taught vocabulary by means of translation, word list and vocabulary exercises (matching words in columns, matching words with their pictures, filling in the blank, odd one off, and puzzle?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Related to the statement of the problem, this study is intended to find out whether students who are taught vocabulary with mapping and acronyms as vocabulary teaching techniques in vocabulary teaching obtain higher vocabulary achievement than those who are taught vocabulary by means of translation, word list and vocabulary exercises (matching words in columns, matching words with their pictures, filling in the blank, odd one off, and puzzle).

1.4 The Hypotheses

There are two hypotheses in this study: the null hypotheses and the alternative hypotheses.

1.4.1 The Null Hypotheses

There is no significant difference on vocabulary achievement between students who are taught vocabulary by using mapping and acronyms and those who are taught vocabulary by means of translation, word list and vocabulary exercises (matching words in columns, matching words with their pictures, filling in the blank, odd one off, and puzzle).

1.4.2 The Alternative Hypotheses

The students who are taught vocabulary by using mapping and acronyms as vocabulary teaching techniques in teaching vocabulary obtain higher vocabulary achievement than those who are taught vocabulary by means of translation, word list and vocabulary exercises (matching words in columns, matching words with their pictures, filling in the blank, odd one off, and puzzle).

1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study

Because of time limitation, it is necessary to limit the scope of the study.

First, because of its limited sample, as it was quite difficult to gather all of Junior High School students, the writer did not aim to generalize the findings of her study to include larger population.

Second, since the time that was given to finish this study was limited, the treatments that were given to the samples were only within 24 meetings. In regard to the limited time, materials that were taught to the samples were only under the three themes (**Health, Cloth** and **Recreation**) out of nine themes (**sport, health,**

clothing, rural life, recreation, public service, entertainment, animals, and **Indonesia's geography)** that are given in the curriculum. These three themes were chosen since these were the themes of the class discussion when the writer conducted this study. The writer did so as she needed to adjust with the class course outlines. (The detailed materials and the list of words related to the three themes above can be seen in the appendix 10).

Third, being aware that there are many aspects to teach in vocabulary teaching and learning such as *pronunciation* and *spelling, the grammar of a new item, collocation, word formation,* and *meanings,* the writer needed to limit the aspects to teach on *meanings.* Since there are many aspects of meanings to teach such as "*denotation, connotation, affective meaning, appropriateness, synonym, hyponyms, co-hyponyms, polysemy, homonymy, homophone,* and *translation*" she realized that it was quite difficult to teach all of the aspects of meaning within 24 meetings. Thus, the aspect of meaning that would be taught in this study was denotation. This aspect of meaning was chosen because it deals with the meaning of a word or phrase related to the real world (International Dictionary of English, 1995). In addition, that kind of meaning is the one that people mostly deal with in every day life.

Fourth, as a lot of techniques can be applied to teach vocabulary such as verbal mapping, acronyms, mnemonic, pictures, games, songs, cards, reading passages and so on, the writer realized that it was quite impossible to apply all of teaching techniques in a limited time. Although she recognized that all of the techniques are good to teach vocabulary; she did not particularly reject them.

However, it was necessary to limit the techniques that were applied in this study. Thus, the writer only took *mapping* and *acronyms as* the teaching techniques to teach vocabulary with considerations that in her teaching experiences, these two techniques could be applied in a big class. Besides, they could motivate students to learn vocabulary items individually and encourage them to have their own creativity and imagination to learn English words both at school and at home. In addition, the two techniques were simple to apply and needed no money to prepare, but gave significant advantages. Furthermore, *mapping* and *acronyms* were often seen in students' English textbooks and of other subjects' textbooks such as biology, geography, history, and economy. Unfortunately, these techniques were not used effectively in teaching and learning vocabulary.

1.6 Significance of the Study

Since most English teachers have a lot of school and personal tasks to do, they do not have enough time to prepare techniques and media to teach vocabulary. Consequently, they tend to use the same techniques and media to present materials. The monotonous techniques will make students bored easily. Thus, even though the writer did not aim to generalize her findings, she expected that her study would give a beneficial contribution to English teachers especially of Junior High Schools in teaching vocabulary items effectively. In addition to this, the writer hoped that her findings would encourage both English teachers and students to use mapping and acronyms as techniques in English teaching and learning process.

1.7 Assumptions

This study was based on the following assumptions:

First, in order to have a good test, some pilot tests should be administered; therefore, the writer needed another class. Here, the writer took the class II C (the pilot group) as the class II C students had nearly the same characteristics, nearly the same average of intelligence (the average of the students' intelligence was taken from the results of the students' intelligence test that was conducted by the school before the writer conducted this study) and nearly the same average of English report mark as the class II A (the experimental group) and the class II B (the control group) to whom the real test would be administered. From the pilot tests, the writer got a valid and reliable vocabulary English test of which items had good level of difficulty and discrimination.

Second, as the experimental and the control groups had nearly the same characteristics, the same average of intelligence and the same English report mark; were taught by the same English teacher; and received the same materials it was assumed that there were not any significant differences in terms of intelligence, treatments and materials that were received by both the experimental and the control groups except mapping and acronyms that were used as vocabulary teaching techniques to teach vocabulary items. Thus, the future different vocabulary achievement between the experimental and the control groups was only influenced and affected by the application of mapping and acronyms in teaching vocabulary.

Third, because the writer had explained to the English teacher who taught the experimental and the control groups about what mapping and acronyms are, what they look like, what their benefits are and the procedures to do during the treatments, the writer believed that the teacher would not find significant difficulty to apply the techniques. In addition, the teacher has been teaching English for more than eight years, so she would not find difficulty to manage her classes.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the theory of types of vocabulary, vocabulary selection, aspects taught in vocabulary teaching, word classification, vocabulary tests and techniques to teach vocabulary items; and several previous studies. The theories and the previous studies are discussed more deeply in chapter II (see page 15).

1.8.1   Types of Vocabulary

In this section, the writer discusses two kinds of vocabulary: receptive and productive vocabulary (Gairns & Redman, 1998: 64; Haycraft, 1978: 44 in Hatch & Brown, 1995: 370).

1.8.2 Vocabulary Selection

In this part, the writer discussed sources to select vocabulary items such as course books, exercises, magazines and newspapers (Gairns & Redman, 1998:

54); criteria for selecting vocabulary (Gairns & Redman, 1998: 56 – 61; Richards, 1970 in Nation (1990: 21); and groups of vocabulary selection (Gairns & Redman, 1998: 69).

1.8.3 Aspects Taught in Vocabulary Teaching

Here, the writer discussed pronunciation and spelling, the grammar of a new item, collocation, word formation, and aspect of meanings as important aspects to teach in vocabulary teaching and learning process (Ur, 2000: 60 – 62).

1.8.4 Word Classification

In this section, the writer discussed about open and closed classes to classify words based on their functional categories (Lyons, 1977). According to him, *noun, adjective, verb and adverb* belong to open classes. On the other hand, *pronoun, preposition, conjunction* and *determiner* belong to closed classes.

1.8.5 Vocabulary Testing

Here, the writer discussed seven types to test vocabulary. They are *multiple-choice, odd one out, matching words, writing sentences, dictation, filling in the blanks* and *translation* (Ur, 2000: 71).

1.8.6 Techniques to Teach Vocabulary

In this part, the writer discussed various techniques to teach vocabulary such as mapping, acronyms, mnemonic, songs, pictures, word list and word card, mime and gestures, game, reading passages, and guessing words from context.

1.8.7 The Previous Study

In this section, the writer discussed several previous studies that had been conducted by other researchers.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

The key terms to be defined are vocabulary, technique, denotation, achievement, mapping and acronyms.

1.9.1 Vocabulary

Longman Advanced American Dictionary (2000: 1612) defines vocabulary into five definitions. First, vocabulary is all the words that someone knows, learns, or uses. Second, vocabulary is the words that are typically used when talking about a particular subject. Third, vocabulary is all the words in a particular language. Fourth, vocabulary is the special skills or features that are typical of a particular subject. The last, vocabulary is a list of words with explanation of their meanings, often in a book for learning a language.

Related to the definitions above, American Heritage(r) Dictionary of the English Language (2000) added three definitions. First, vocabulary is the sum of

words used by, understood by, or at the command of a particular person or group. Second, vocabulary is a list of words and often phrases, usually arranged alphabetically and defined or translated; a lexicon or glossary. The last, vocabulary is a supply of expressive means; a repertoire of communication e.g. a dancer's vocabulary of movement.

In addition to this, Oxford dictionary (1987: 419) defines vocabulary as the total number of words in a language and list of words used in a book, while International Dictionary of English (1995) defines vocabulary as all the words used by a particular person or all the words which exist in a particular language or subject.

According to the definitions above, this thesis follows the definition that vocabulary is a total number of words in a language (English) used by and understood by a particular person or group that is arranged alphabetically and defined or translated so that it serves as a means of expression.

Related to the definition above, vocabulary teaching is concerned with the selection and presentation of words (lexis) for learners (Johnson, H. & Johnson, K., 1999).

1.9.2 Technique

Oxford dictionary (1987: 385) defines technique as method of doing something expertly, while International Dictionary of English (1995) defines technique as a method or a way of doing an activity requiring skill in language

(English). In this study, a technique refers to a method to teach language (English) especially vocabulary.

1.9.3 Denotation

Denotation is a part of the meaning of a word or phrase that relates it to phenomena in the real world or in a fictional or possible world (International Dictionary of English, 1995).

1.9.4 Achievement

Achievement is defined as thing done successfully, especially with effort and skill (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 1989: 10).

1.9.5 Mapping

Mapping is a technique to combine and connect separate ideas (words or phrases) together on a page (Nicholl & Rose, 1997: 222). In addition, learners can review one-year course in just an hour, or record an entire book in one easily remembered form (ibid: 146).

Since everyone can apply this technique, teachers or learners can start with writing the topic on the center of the blackboard. Then, he must try to find the sub-topics and display them around the center that can be connected by lines. Here, the sub-topics must be limited (not more than seven main branches). After that, he should find key words related to them. To make the words easy to remember, they can use identifiable symbols such as crosses, check marks,

exclamation points, question marks, hearts, triangles, color or pictures in front of the words (ibid: 98).

1.9.6 Acronyms

Acronym is defined as an abbreviation consisting of the first letters of each word in the name of something, pronounced as a word (International Dictionary of English, 1995:12). In addition to this, Nicholl & Rose (1997: 144 - 145) added that an acronym is a word made up of the first letters of the words, phrases, or sentences that we are trying to remember.

In this study, an acronym is defined as an abbreviation consisting of the first letters, the first and the second letters, or the first, the second and the third letters of the words or phrases in the name of something, pronounced as a word or words. Here, the acronyms that students made are free as far as the acronyms are easy to remember and they help students to learn words or phrases easily.

1.10 The Organization of the Thesis

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter I deals with the introduction to the thesis including the background of the study, statements of the problems, the objectives of the thesis, the hypotheses, the scope and limitations of the study, the significance of the study, assumptions, theoretical framework, definition of key terms, and the organization of the thesis.

Chapter II "Review of Related Literature" deals with theoretical background related to the study that covers types of vocabulary, vocabulary selection, aspects

taught in vocabulary teaching, words classification, vocabulary tests, and techniques to teach vocabulary; and the previous studies.

Chapter III is Research Methodology. It consists of the research method and design, the population and the sample, the variables, the research instrument, data collection, data analysis procedure and technique.

Chapter IV deals with findings and discussion. The last chapter, chapter V is summary and suggestions.