

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background of the study stating the reason and the importance of doing this research, identification of the problem, scope of the study, research questions, and purpose of the study, the significance of the study, the definition of terms, and the thesis overview.

1.1 Background of the Study

Dealing with the fact that English is a global language to create a competitive generation in all aspects of life, Indonesian education includes English subject in the curriculum of education from playgroup level to university level. The aim is to prepare young generation to be more competent in English in order to be able to communicate more effectively in many fields. However, in order to be able to communicate well, students need a large number of vocabularies since vocabulary is a basic element of communication.

Vocabulary is a fundamental aspect of language because it supports students' mastery of the four language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Richard and Renandya (2002, 255) say that vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read, and write. On that account, the more words the students know, the better they will understand what they hear or read. Besides, the more words they have, the more accurately they will express their ideas in spoken or written form. Hence, without an extensive vocabulary, students will face an obstacle in comprehending and delivering their ideas in English.

In addition, vocabulary is also essential for communicative competence and it helps to successful comprehension and production. When students have large of vocabulary size, they can perform better in all aspects of English language. By having a large number of vocabulary stocks, the students can understand other people's talking well, give responses, speak fluently, and write some kinds of topic. Thus, vocabulary plays an important role in improving and developing students' communicative competence in learning English as foreign language.

Nunan (1999, 103) states that if one has an extensive vocabulary, it is possible to obtain meaning from spoken and written texts, even though one does not know the grammatical structure in which the texts are encoded. In other words, with a little grammar, the students can have a little smooth in communication and comprehension, but without vocabulary it is difficult for others to express their idea or understand information they get. Accordingly, lack of grammatical structure will not interrupt communication and comprehension; otherwise lack of vocabulary will interrupt the communication and comprehension because without sufficient vocabulary students cannot understand others or express their own ideas.

In Indonesia, English is taught as the first foreign language at school. The major problems that students encounter in learning English are comprehension and communication. Many students do not understand when they listen or read something. For example, in reading activity, most of the students have to struggle to get the information from the text. The students sometimes lose their interest to read English text since they have to struggle with the words they do not know and

try to look up in a dictionary. They also feel reluctant to participate actively in the class because they do not know how to share their idea or opinion in English during the class discussion. Abebe and Deneke (2015, 83) reported that 59, 7% of learners feel nervous in speaking English because they do not have enough vocabulary. 58, 3% of learners also express that they do not have exact words to express their ideas. Therefore, lack of vocabulary is one of the problems why students do not feel interested in learning English and remain silent and reluctant to participate actively in the classroom.

Moreover, students' active participation is extremely important to the success of learning a foreign language. According to Liu as cited in Abebe and Deneke (2015, 75) students who participate actively tend to have better academic achievement compared to students who do not participate. Yet, many students do not participate properly, they are present in the class but they do not pay attention to the lesson. They do not listen to the teacher attentively and feel bored since they are not interested in learning English. Students are not interested in learning English because they do not understand the target language. As stated by Abebe and Deneke (2015, 80) students believe that in order to understand the target language, they must understand every word that is spoken. Therefore, most of the students face difficulties to participate in the process of learning due to the lack of vocabulary which makes them fail in comprehending the target language. Accordingly, teachers have to find a strategy which can help the students to improve their vocabulary knowledge and encourage them to participate actively in the classroom.

There are many strategies that can be used in teaching vocabulary. Two of them are semantic mapping and wordlist. Semantic mapping is one of CLT's (Communicative Language Teaching) strategies that can be used in teaching speaking, reading, writing, and vocabulary. Flood, et al (2003, 936) reports that vocabulary words that were taught and learned in networks were better than words that were taught through contextual approaches. Furthermore, Graves as quoted in Antonacci and Catherine (2012, 94) asserts that semantic mapping is one of the most powerful techniques to teach vocabulary because it engages students in thinking about word relationships. It also involves the teacher and learners working together to construct the map.

While wordlist is one of the traditional strategies that teachers usually utilize in teaching vocabulary as it is simple and easy to be prepared. Wordlist consists of a sheet of paper on which learners write both the L2 word and its meaning (as cited in Baleghizadeh & Ashoori 2010, 252). Prince as cited in Folse (2004, 3) points out that some students performed better when they were given only a list of L2 words and their translation. The students have to memorize and repeat the words over and over again until they memorize them. By using list of words, the students can memorize the words faster within a short of time and retain the words better.

However, based on the preliminary study and interview with the English teacher at SMA Negeri 11 Tangerang, the writer found that the teacher never used semantic mapping and wordlist in teaching vocabulary or other skills such reading, writing, or speaking. The teacher usually teaches vocabulary through reading skill. The teacher asks the students to find difficult words, underline them,

and give the meaning. Sometimes the teacher helps them to translate the meaning or they can look up their dictionary to search the meaning. The teacher also never asks the students to memorize the target words and teach them how to pronounce and use the words correctly. Thornbury (2002, 23) asserts that to achieve the outcomes, the learner need not only to learn a lot of words, but also to remember them. The students have to learn new words easily, memorize them, and practice to make use of the new words so that they can acquire the language. Yet, the teacher still use traditional strategies which make the students feel bored and reluctant to learn the language.

In addition, she also found that the students have very low proficiency in English. Most of them do not understand the speech and instructions given by the writer. The English teacher added that the students' motivation and interest in learning English was also very low since they get difficulties in comprehending the spoken and the written language. One of the factors might be due to the lack of vocabulary. Considering students' problems above the writer would like to conduct an experimental research in order to compare the use of semantic mapping and wordlist to improve students' vocabulary and participation.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The statement of the problem emphasizes on the difficulties of the students on understanding English in spoken and written language. The students get difficulties in understanding some texts they read and cannot comprehend the information they heard. The students have to struggle with words in order to understand the language. Consequently, it makes the students reluctant in learning English and causes them unwilling to participate actively in the process of

learning. This problem might happen due to the lack of vocabulary. Furthermore, students' motivation and interest in learning vocabulary is very low because of the implementation of inappropriate teaching strategies to fulfill the students' level and needs.

On that account, the writer wished to focus her research on the effectiveness of semantic mapping in improving students' vocabulary and participation at SMA Negeri 11 Tangerang. The writer was also going to compare it with a traditional strategy (wordlist) in order to know its effectiveness.

1.3 Scope of the Study

This research is conducted to find out the implementation of semantic mapping in improving students' vocabulary and participation. The writer limited the discussion on the effectiveness of semantic mapping in improving students' vocabulary and participation to the Eleventh Grade Students of SMA Negeri 11 Tangerang, 2016-2017 academic year. The writer also compared semantic mapping with wordlist in order to find out whether semantic mapping is effective or not in improving students' vocabulary and participation.

1.4 Research Questions

By referring to the background of research stated above, the questions needed to be answered in this research were as follows:

1. What are the students' achievement before and after the implementation of semantic mapping and wordlist?
2. What are the students' participation before and after the implementation of semantic mapping and wordlist?

3. What are the students' attitudes toward the implementation of semantic mapping and wordlist?
4. Is there any statistically significant difference between students' achievement before and after the implementation of semantic mapping and wordlist?
5. Is there any statistically significant difference between students' participation before and after the implementation of semantic mapping and wordlist?

1.5 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research can be stated as follows:

1. To obtain information about the students' vocabulary achievement before and after the implementation of semantic mapping and wordlist.
2. To obtain information about the effectiveness of semantic mapping in improving students' vocabulary and students' participation.
3. To obtain information about the effectiveness of wordlist in improving students' vocabulary and students' participation.
4. To obtain information about the students' attitudes toward the implementation of semantic mapping and wordlist.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The writer expects that this study will give significance values to:

1. For the students

This research is expected to give valuable contribution to students who have low proficiency in English due to the lack of vocabulary and problem in memorizing vocabulary. This research is also expected to give students a new

experience in learning English using semantic mapping. And it is hoped that the students can use semantic mapping and wordlist in their future study.

2. For the English teachers

The findings of this research are expected to give valuable insight about teaching vocabulary and improving the teaching performance of the English teachers by applying semantic mapping or wordlist in the process of teaching and learning English at SMA Negeri 11 Tangerang.

3. For further studies

To provide further information for other researchers who are interested in conducting further research on the effectiveness of semantic mapping and wordlist.

1.7 Definition of Terms

1. Semantic mapping

Semantic maps are graphic displays of words meanings that offer students a visual representation of how words and concepts are related through a network of organized knowledge (Pittelman as cited in Antonacci 2015, 16).

2. Vocabulary knowledge

Vocabulary knowledge is defined as the ability to go from the printed form of a word to its meaning (Shanker & Cockrum, 2010).

3. Rote learning

Rote learning refers to the learning of material by repeating over and over again until it memorized (Richard & Plat as cited in Khoii and Sharififar 2013, 202).

4. Wordlist

Wordlist is one of the old-fashioned vocabulary learning strategies. It consists of a sheet of paper on which learners write both the L2 word and its meaning. (Baleghizadeh & Ashoori 2010, 252)

5. Participation

Paying attention, being on task, responding to questions, participating in group discussion, asking questions, seeking help and make good use of class time is defined as participation. (Zolten & long as cited in Devi 2008, 16)

1.8 Thesis Overview

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 consists of background of the study, identification of the problems, scope of the study, research questions, purpose of the study, significant of the study, definition of terms and followed by thesis overview.

Chapter II consists of definition of vocabulary, the importance of vocabulary, vocabulary learning, types of vocabulary, principles of teaching vocabulary, semantic mapping, rote learning of word list, definition of participation, the importance of participation, participation indicators, prior research, and conceptual framework.

Chapter III consists of research design, research subject and setting, procedure, population and sampling, methods of data collection, research instrument, data analysis and hypothesis.

Chapter IV consists of the research findings and discussion of the research.

Chapter V consists of conclusions which are taken from the research findings. Some suggestions are offered for the school and teachers. It also discusses the limitations of the study and presents suggestions for further study.

