

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Study

Language has important role in human life, since it is a tool which human use to interact with other people. Therefore, mastering several foreign languages is considerably necessary, especially English. Status of English as an international language has made people all over the world do their best to master English.

Considering the fact above, Indonesian government put English as one of important subjects that should be mastered by the students. English covers the four language skills areas (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) as the intention and in order to achieve these intention the students should master vocabulary first.

Murcia (2001: 285) says that Vocabulary learning is central to language acquisition, whether the language is first, second, or foreign. By having enough vocabulary, the ability to communicate and to convey our social needs can be established. If learners have had enough vocabulary, they will be able to understand the utterance which they listen, they will be able to speak fluently, and they can understand the content of the text easily. It means that the students need to master enough vocabulary as one of the language components besides grammar, spelling, and pronunciation.

Based on the writer's experience in teaching practice in Senior High School level in Pematangsiantar, it is not easy for her students to learn vocabulary.

The writer found that the English ability of the students was still low because they lacked of vocabulary. As the example, when they seem having ideas in their mind they couldn't express them well because they lacked of vocabulary. The main problem was the students were difficult to memorize the words, moreover the strategy that is used by the teacher in teaching vocabulary was not interesting or monotonous. The students were usually given many new words and asked to open their dictionary to find the meaning of those words, however after they found out the words, they forgot them. So, when the teaching learning process was taking place, the students did not give attention and feel bored.

That is why, the English teacher must have the ability to use various teaching strategies. It is necessary for English teacher to understand their students' vocabulary learning strategies. Murcia (2001: 288) says

'new words should not be learned by simple rote memorization. It is important that new vocabulary items be presented in context rich enough to provide clues to meaning and that students be given multiple exposure to items they should learn. Exercises and activities include learning words in word association lists, focusing on highlighted words in texts, and playing vocabulary games'.

For this purpose it is needed to make variation to teach students' vocabulary achievement.

There are so many strategies which can be used to teach vocabulary for students. One of them is "Semantic mapping". In <http://www.longwood.edu/staff/jonescd/projects/educ530/aboxley/graphicorg/sm.htm> (accessed in March 2013), semantic mapping is a visual strategy for vocabulary expansion and extension of knowledge by displaying in categories words related

to one another. Semantic mapping is an adaptation of concept definition mapping but builds on students prior knowledge or schema.

According to the writer, semantic mapping can make the students more interested and relaxed in learning vocabulary because by applying semantic mapping, the students will be encouraged to get new vocabularies by looking for other words which have relationship with the words which are given by teacher. In this case, a text is chosen based on the words to be learned and students are asked to draw a diagram of the relationships between particular words found in the text. It is believed that by applying semantic mapping, the students can enjoy their studying and increase their vocabulary continually.

B. The Problem of the Study

The problem of this study is formulated by the following: **”Is there any significant effect of applying semantic mapping strategy on the senior high school students’ vocabulary achievement?”**

C. The Scope of the Study

The study is focused on the effect of semantic mapping strategy on senior high school students’ vocabulary achievement in reading descriptive text which is taken from senior high school’s textbook.

D. The Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is for finding the effect of applying semantic mapping strategy on the senior high school students' vocabulary achievement in reading descriptive text.

E. The Significance of the Study

The findings of the research are expected to be useful for the teachers, other researchers, and institution.

1. For teachers, to help teachers in finding a good teaching strategy to increase students' vocabulary achievement.
2. For other researchers, to increase their knowledge and the reference in conducting further research for obtaining better result.
3. For institution, to develop the teaching learning strategy for increasing motivation to teach vocabulary in further.