

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Study

English is an international language that is used by most people in the world. It is very important to be mastered by everyone who wants to progress the foreign language skill. English language becomes one of the main subjects for the students' of Junior High School. In English language, there are some skills which must be mastered by the students. These are receptive and productive skill. The receptive skills include reading (understanding written language) and listening (understanding spoken language). Productive skills include speaking (producing spoken language) and writing (producing written language). In order to support those skills, it is essential to learn vocabulary.

Vocabulary is the most important thing in English language. Without vocabulary, the skills would be meaningless. McCarthy (1990: 8) says that no matter how successfully the sounds of second language are mastered, without words to express a wide range of meanings, communication in second language just cannot happen in any meaningful way. And yet vocabulary often seems to be the least systematized and the least well catered for of all the aspects of learning a foreign language.

Scott (2002:144) stated on his book entitles "How to Train Good Vocabulary", there are some techniques that can be used in the teaching and learning English vocabulary such as; learning training, using mnemonic, word

card, guessing from contexts, coping strategies for production, using dictionaries, spelling rules and motivation. The techniques can be used to support teaching English vocabulary in the school. And also in writing descriptive text.

Vocabulary is the first thing that every student learns in their formal and informal education. It assumed that if the students learn English in earlier age, of course they have much vocabulary by now. But the fact is they still have problem in learning English vocabulary. Students have difficulties to memorize the vocabulary. They just memorize the word if in the classroom, but after that they sometimes forgot what they have learned before. It happened since most of the teachers did not give them an impressive lesson and no exposure to the language outside the classroom. So, they forget their vocabulary easily and it makes teaching and learning vocabulary needs developing. One way in learning vocabulary is by using mnemonic technique.

Although English is not the new subject for junior high school especially the eighth grade students, they still have some difficulties in learning it, including writing skill. Writing skill is important to be mastered to produce written language. They often confused with what they actually should write. For the example, when the teacher asked them to write some sentences, they are still confused because of their vocabulary that was limited.

The writer had done the observation at SMPS Muhammadiyah 1 Medan on May 1st 2018. She interviewed some students to get information about the students' mastery in vocabulary. Here is one of the interviews.

Interview (I) : *“Jadi bagaimana menurut kalian supaya kalian mudah memahami pelajaran Bahasa Inggris?”* (So, what do you think the way to understand English easily?)

Student (St 1) : *“Maunya tiap belajar ada menghafal kosa kata gitu Miss, biar tau gurunya ngomong apa.”* (We want to memorize vocabulary so that we know what the teacher tells us.)

(St 2) : *“Harus punya banyak kosa kata dulu Miss, biar tau arti tulisan di buku apa.”*(We have to know many vocabularies in order to know what the book means.)

(St 3) : *“Pengennya diajarin dari dasar Miss, biar paham ke pelajaran yang di buku.”* (We want to be taught a Basic English in order to understand the material.)

(I) : *“Apakah kamu sudah mencoba menghafal kosa kata setiap hari?”*
(Have you ever tried to memorize vocabulary everyday.)

(St 1) : *“Belum Miss, nggak tau menghafalnya bagaimana supaya cepat.”*(Not yet miss, I don't know how to memorize quickly.)

Based on the researcher observation of student writing skill in the seven grade student of SMPS Muhamadiyah 1 Medan, they have difficulties in producing sentences and understanding the meaning of the words they wrote. When researcher asks them to write the descriptive text, the students have difficulties to remember the words. It is proven by the data taken by the researcher, when the researcher observe and ask the student to write descriptive text.

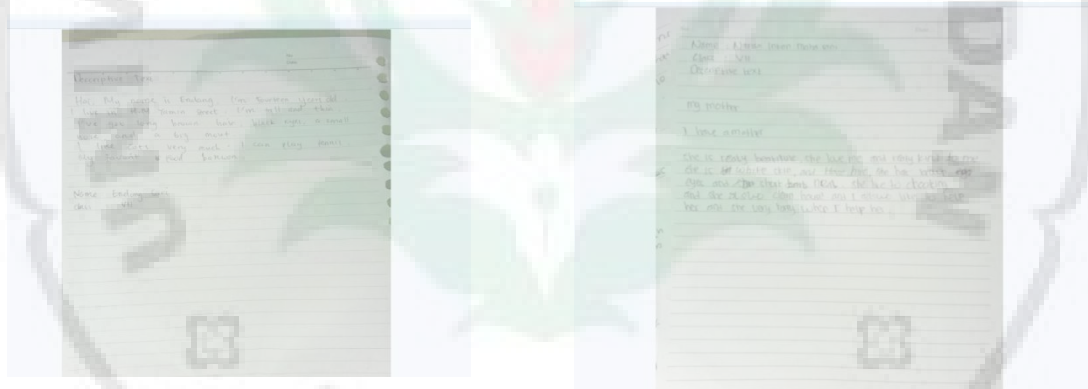


Figure 1.1 The example of students writing in descriptive text.

Then, teachers do not identify their students' such as visual, aural, read/write and the teacher don't have the technique to memorize the vocabulary. The researcher found that the teacher just ask the student to memorize the word list and finding the meaning. The teacher doesn't know how to make the student's easier in studying vocabulary. The reality is the teacher feel so hard to teach their students in the vocabulary.

The other problem faced by students is the difficulty to understand the meaning of the words. The students are still use Indonesian language when they

were asking and answering the question from the teacher. Therefore, it is necessary for the teacher to apply certain technique to solve those problems and makes the students interested to learn English. In a similar study Anjomafrouz and Tajalli (2012:3) investigated the effects of using mnemonic associations on vocabulary recall of Iranian EFL learners over time. The results of the study showed that mnemonic method significantly affected the vocabulary recall of adult students in both receptive and productive modes.

Mnemonics technique can be effective and easy to be applied. One of the most popular mnemonics is *keyword method*. It can motivate the students and the classroom will be more interesting. Mnemonics technique is a way to help students remember information more effectively and easily. This technique is best used in studying vocabulary in English. Students can master the vocabulary easier and fun. These techniques used to aid the recall of new information. The implementation of mnemonic technique helps them remember more information they have learned and also can strengthen their vocabulary. Those are the reason why the researcher uses mnemonics technique.

Mnemonic Technique is a teaching technique that is quite sophisticated and is based on the fact that the basic vocabulary of every language is linked to everyday things in the environment (Marcella, 2010). Therefore, mnemonics technique can be used to memorize difficult words, while the words that easy to remember are not necessary to use this technique.

Writing is an important skill, because by this skill people can carry out vocabulary with others, give the ideas and exchange the information with others. In the speaking, the learners should practice more every day and they should be self-confident. They prefer to keep silent to write English because they worry if they make a mistake. That is one of the problems in English teaching-learning process. Because that the researcher to do memorize the vocabulary with the mnemonic technique. And then, the researcher order the student to write descriptive text for knows how the student enhances in vocabulary.

Descriptive text is a text which says what a person or a thing is like. Its purpose is to describe and reveal a particular person, place, or thing.

Descriptive text has a function to describe something in detail in order to enable the readers to see, hear, feel and touch it directly involve themselves in the event. The context of this kind of text is the description of particular thing, animal, person, or others, for instance: our pets or person we know well. A good descriptive text includes many vivid sensory details that paint a picture and appeals to all of the reader's senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste when appropriate. Descriptive text may also paint picture of the feeling the person, place or thing invokes in the writer.

The researcher has interested in learning vocabulary, so the researcher choose this title as her graduating paper. Another reason, the researcher was excited to applying mnemonics technique in teaching English. By using mnemonics technique in English learning hopefully the researcher and the readers

can learn more and increase their vocabulary. Based on the reasons stated above, the researcher will create a research.

B. The Problem of the Study

Based on the research background, the writer formulates the problem as bellow:

“How does mnemonic technique enhance the students’ vocabulary in writing descriptive text?”

C. The Objective of the Study

Based on the problem of the study above, the objective of the study is formulated, to analyze how the mnemonic technique to enhance the students’ vocabulary in writing descriptive text.

D. The Scope of the Study

The scopes in this study are the teacher and students in seven grade students at SMPS Muhammadiyah 1 Medan. In this study the researcher will observe how the teacher uses mnemonic technique to enhance the students’ vocabulary in teaching writing descriptive text. The study will limit and focus on the how mnemonic technique can enhance the students’ vocabulary which can be seen on the students writing descriptive text at SMPS Muhammadiyah 1 Medan.

E. The Significance of the Study

The findings of the research are expected to be beneficial and be able to give contribution to the improvement of the effective English teaching and learning process theoretically and practically.

1. Theoretically

To give some information about the mnemonic technique for teaching vocabulary in writing descriptive texts and how to implement memorize vocabulary in mnemonic technique.

2. Practically

It can make the student memorize quickly and remember long-term in their memory, and also the student interest to memorize. They have more opportunities to practice their target technique mnemonic in vocabulary when they are in the classroom and also outside the classroom, and also get useful and meaningful.