

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

Language which is composed of words and their arrangements in meaningful units is like a transmitter, transmitting information from the speaker to the listener or from the writer to the reader. To understand a language, we have to invent the meaning of words as many as possible either in a sentence at least. Therefore, it can be assumed that language is a systematic communication tool that may transfer one's ideas or feelings through meaningful, sign, and sounds. Because the definition of language refers to the expression of certain meanings, of course it may not neglected that the role of words chosen. It plays an important role as a means of understanding the meaning of words correctly. Moreover, Wallace (1982: 9) argues that there is a sense in which learning a foreign language is basically a matter of learning vocabulary in target language. Hence, vocabulary is the basic aspect of language in the teaching learning activity. It means that it is an important part of the language components like grammar, pronunciation, spelling, etc.

Learning a second language or foreign language involves learning the sound system, grammar, and vocabulary of that language. Vocabulary is the amount of collection of words of a language that is basic to listen, speak, and write in the language. Vocabulary is one of the important elements needed in order to master a language because it is the stock of words in a given language. It

is used to comprehend the meaning of words so that the learners may understand a text and construct the organized sentences well. Nation (1990) states that vocabulary is an essential element in studying English the same as grammar, pronunciation, spelling, structure, etc. Vocabulary is really needed to get learners do their language tasks effectively.

In English teaching and learning process, vocabulary is considered as a systematic and principle approach to enable students in mastering English (Nation : 1990 : 1). There are very strong reasons to judge vocabulary as it. First, because of the considerable source we have good information about what to do about vocabulary and about what to focus on. This means that vocabulary work can be directed toward useful words and can give learners practice in useful skills. Second, there must be a good understanding of the way deals with vocabulary, the principle behind it, and is theoretical and experimental justification. It is an effective approach of getting learners to study list of words out of context to face the implicit or explicit meaning of a word precisely. Third, vocabulary has a systematic and principle approach in which both learners and teachers see vocabulary as being important, if not the most important element in language learning.

In Indonesia, English is taught as foreign language as stated in the 1994 National Curriculum. English is taught from the elementary level up to the university level. The purpose of the learning English in Indonesian curriculum is to enable the students in using English for communication. For achieving the purpose, learners should learn English vocabulary as a means to express their

messages in communication. Vocabulary is one of the basic elements in achieving language skills. It is impossible for the students to understand what their teacher explain without using more vocabularies.

The main goal of vocabulary learning is to increase students' vocabulary mastery in which second language learners are in the same school system as native speakers in order to master the four language skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Nation : 1990:22). In relation to the goal of English teaching and learning processs in Educational Unit Level Curriculum, (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan : KTSP), students' English proficiency in mastering the four language skills, particularly in reading skill. As Wassman (1993) defines that the broadest vocabulary needed is in the reading and listening skills. It means that vocabulary is used as the basic elements to grasp those skills because it influences learners' ability to translate and construct a sentence to get the meaning of each word in English correctly.

A research report from Department of Research and Development Board of Education and Culture, Department of Republic of Indonesia (Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan, Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia : Litbang Depdikbud RI) in 1993 concluded that Indonesian Junior High School students' ability in reading were regarded low. The conclusion comes from the data that 76.95 % students of Grade VIII Junior High School were unable to use dictionaries. Thus, only 5 % who were able to use dictionaries (Sugiarto, 2001). The conclusion implies that the students had low ability in mastering vocabulary in English.

As the matter of fact, that the students in Indonesia are lacking of their own English vocabulary. Students usually have many problems in mastering English words. They get limited vocabulary to comprehend the meaning of a text, they can not recognize the meaning of each word, they are not able to hear the correct English words from the speaker, they can not compose their writing task successfully, and they get difficulty to state some sentences in English. Those problems cause them to face some difficulties in communicating receptively or productively in English. Those students' problems occurred because of some reasons, they are :

1. Teachers tend to stress teaching mostly on grammatical rules, structures, and answer the questions of a text. They do not realize that vocabulary should be included to teach first as the basic to understand English. Teachers tend to focus on reading comprehension without teaching the techniques or strategies on how to recognize English word. They reject to teach the principles of vocabulary and its theoretical and experimental justification.
2. The students should be interested in understanding the message, from the point of view of vocabulary learning, this interest creates a need to understand the unknown words in the message. This is the teachers' responsibilities to create the text that interest students.
3. English teachers almost ignore the difficult words. In this case, they need to give some attention to the unknown word appears in a reading passage and

give clearer explanation about it to help students to recognize the unfamiliar word well.

4. Most Indonesian teachers as indicated by (Sugiarjo :2001) teach English vocabulary through translation. They translate a new word in English into Indonesian and they ask their students to memorize the words without regarding the actual vocabulary learning strategies employed by learners.

Moreover, The 2006 English Curriculum for Junior High School does not cover the idea of teaching vocabulary effectively because it contains all the four language skills in listening, reading, speaking, and writing. The problems occur when reading becomes the main goal of teaching and learning processes; the students are forced to know the meaning of the whole words in the text, but they lack of vocabulary mastery. The curriculum also urges that the procedures of presenting a standard competency is divided into four steps *i.e. the building knowledge of the field, the modeling of the text, the join construction of the text, and free and independent construction of the text*. It suggests these procedural steps to guarantee the teaching learning process so that the students can achieve the whole competences. However, the facts indicate that the English teaching in Indonesia has not been satisfactory. A survey conducted by the Department of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan: Depdikbud, 1990) reported that teachers (95,4 % of state and 91,9 % of private school) admitted that the English instruction was unsuccessful.

The problems were also found by the researcher as a teacher of English in State Junior High School 1: Sekolah Menengah Pertama Negeri (SMP N) 1, Sei

Kepayang Barat, Asahan Region. Through his observation there were still many students faced difficulties in comprehending the reading text and express their ideas through writing. This problem was also faced by the students in Grade IX. The researcher can see the fact through the students' ability in speaking, writing, and the results of the test. For the last three years the score of English in National Examination (Ujian Nasional : UN) at SMP N 1 Sei Kepayang Barat are still unsatisfactory, through the researcher observation and interview, the students face some problems in comprehending the reading text and the test consist of 80 % reading text that needs enough vocabulary to comprehend the reading text. Due to these problems, there should be an attempt to develop the teaching materials for Junior High School especially in terms of vocabulary that is in line with the needs of Junior High School students.

Realizing the fact happens in the field that students who learn English in Indonesia face some difficulties in establishing and increasing their own English vocabulary, there are some previous researchers that have already done the discussion about vocabulary, however the writer realizes that the students' problem in vocabulary mastery is caused by many reasons, one of them is concerned with the teaching materials. Realizing the fact happened in the field that the students face some difficulties in increasing their vocabulary, the writer tend to develop teaching materials based on the students' needs, that are suitable to their environment.

1.2 The Research Problems

In relation to the background of the study that has been presented previously, the problems are formulated as follows:

1. How is the teaching materials in terms of vocabulary appropriate with the Junior High School students' needs?
2. What vocabulary materials should be used by the English teachers of State Junior High School 1 Sei Kepayang Barat, Asahan Region to meet the students' needs?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to answer the research questions, especially in line with the development of teaching materials i.e vocabulary in order to improve English Teaching in Junior High School especially in SMP N 1 Sei Kepayang Barat, Asahan Region. The main objectives of this study are :

1. To match the teaching materials in terms of vocabulary appropriate with the Junior High School Students' needs.
2. To find out what vocabulary materials are used by the English teachers of State Junior High School 1 Sei Kepayang Barat, Asahan Region, in teaching vocabulary to meet the students' needs.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

In line with the background of the study in the previous discussion, there are some efforts in the development teaching materials, especially in terms of

vocabulary to develop English teaching in Junior High School.

This study focuses on The Materials Development in Vocabulary for Junior High School students. The development teaching materials are to improve English teaching that focused on the grade VIII Students at SMP N 1 Sei Kepayang Barat, located in Asahan Region. The school is chosen because the researcher is an English Teacher at that school, where the researcher can easily conduct his preliminary study by observing and interviewing some of his students.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

The findings of the study is expected to be relevant and useful for the students and the teachers of English theoretically and practically.

Theoretically, this study will contribute some advantages for theoretical knowledge to develop teaching materials in vocabulary especially for the Junior High School students as well as for the teachers, and the base for further research in conducting a research that is related to the improvement of teaching materials in vocabulary.

Practically, the results of the study are expected provide some valuable information for english foreign learners in overcoming their problems and difficulties in establishing and increasing their vocabulary. Meanwhile, this study will provide some information for the English teachers in order to decide and choose the best method in teaching English to develop students' ability in increasing the vocabulary mastery.