

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

There are four skills in language learning, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. This is in line with the aim of English learning as stated in the Educational Unit Level Curriculum (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan: KTSP or Curriculum 2006) that is, the students should have written and spoken ability in communication. The ability to communicate is the ability to understand and produce spoken and written text realized in the four language skills.

Besides the skills, vocabulary is one of language components that cannot be separated from language learning. It is the important part of the learning process of a language. A text may be well-comprehended if the students have many vocabularies. It means that reading comprehension depends heavily on vocabulary knowledge. This is not surprising when one realizes that the size of one's vocabulary is usually an indication of the depth of one's knowledge. In addition, students' difficulties in comprehending school text books are attributable in part to their vocabulary knowledge. Thus, vocabulary is undeniably important in obtaining successful comprehension in listening and reading. It also leads the students to speak fluently and compose a good writing.

Therefore, it is important for the students to have adequate vocabularies in order to make them able to communicate well in the target language in any context and situation. The insufficiency of vocabulary acquisition will be one of

obstacle in acquiring language competence. Gu & Johnson (1996:645) say that English vocabulary level has been shown to be strongly related to educational success. Vocabulary is one of the crucial components that play an important role in increasing the students' achievement because it is often regarded as the measure of success in learning foreign language. Gu & Johnson (1996:655) find that student's success and high achievement are closely related to their approaches to vocabulary learning. Thus, a rich vocabulary is a valuable asset and an important attribute of success in any walk of life. Moreover, Bromley (2008:81) emphasizes the important of enhancing vocabulary by relating to school achievement. He states that inadequacy of vocabulary knowledge is the main cause of students' school failure in language learning. It was revealed by the students' average of semester scores in English of State Senior High School (Sekolah Menengah Atas Negeri: SMAN) 16 Medan, which is considered low as presented in Table 1.1:

Table 1.1 The Average of Semester English Scores

School Year Semester Class	2007/2008 (Class XI)		2008/2009 (Class XII)	
	I	II	I	II
IPA ₁	70	68	70	80
IPA ₂	68	68	70	75
IPA ₃	68	72	66	72
IPA ₄	70	70	72	75
IPS ₁	65	65	70	68
IPS ₂	65	68	70	68
IPS ₃	68	68	70	70

From Table 1.1, it can be explained that there are seven different classes, Natural Science (Ilmu Pengetahuan Alam: IPA) 1, 2, 3 and 4. Social Science (Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial: IPS) 1, 2 and 3. The average scores of each class are divided by the total number of the students that results the average scores of each class of semester.

Different ways are usually applied by students to enhance their vocabulary. Amongst the first thing, a foreign language student takes is a dictionary and most students carry their dictionary around. When the students find new words in the text, they look them up into dictionary. It is supposed as the most efficient way to discover meaning and foster students' independence. However, the process of acquiring word meaning that depends highly on the use of dictionary has been very complex because it focuses on some abstract, standard definitions and a few examples of sentences. It is also limited in word grammar and collocation range. Thus, using a dictionary alone is inadequate to satisfy the students' needs.

Moreover, vocabulary learning, as a linguistic competence, such as note taking is ineffective. The writer observes her students in writing down the new vocabulary that comes up in class. More often than not, students will write down the new word with the translation in their own language next to it. Of course, writing things down is necessary if they want to review later. However, at the end of one lesson, the students have a couple of pages of new words that are completely at random. For example, *lecturer*, *happy*, *gun*, *gloat*, *keyboard*, *violet*, etc and it is impossible to retain a list of words like this. Even if they tried to

memorize them, the fact that they are irrelevant to each other makes it difficult to remember them.

In the teaching-learning process, many types of strategies are applied by many teachers to enhance the students' vocabulary. For example, in Grammar Translation Method, vocabulary was typically taught in lists and through memorization. Although it is still used in many classrooms, at present this method is rejected on theoretical grounds.

Teaching vocabulary has been under serious changes and teachers should be careful not to impose additional problems on the students. The goals of vocabulary learning must be more than simply covering a certain number of words on a word list. The purpose of vocabulary learning should also include retaining new words that students have just encountered.

Most students have spent many hours memorizing long lists of vocabulary words, but they are not always successful in using them appropriately or remembering them when needed. The students look for effective ways to increase opportunities for retaining new words in their long-term memory, but forgetting is a common problem. Most students complain that they forget words soon after learning them. Although they spend a number of hours in the classroom, the amounts of their learning is surprisingly not satisfactory and, in fact, lower than the expectations of both teachers and students. The students cannot remember what they learnt sometimes in the past. 70% of what they have learnt is forgotten within 24 hours if they do not try specific efforts to remember them (Rose & Nicholl, 2003:179). Vocabulary is practically useless unless the words learnt can

be recalled and used. The purpose of vocabulary learning should include remembering words.

Since students need to acquire thousands of words to become competent speakers of the target language. Many students are very interested in learning vocabulary but they do not know the way, as they are not aware of the available learning strategies that help them. Lack of knowledge regarding effective ways of vocabulary learning may result forgetfulness. The way students store the obtained words can also contribute to their success in retrieving them when needed. Thus, effective learning strategies should be thought to provide students with successful vocabulary mastery in order to increase their achievement.

Traditional method of vocabulary learning such as memorizing word list of vocabulary items is insufficient. The students should be exposed to a variety of learning strategies to improve their achievement in vocabulary as opposed to traditional learning strategies. Moreover, in order to increase their achievement in vocabulary, it is also suggested to accommodate students' learning styles because the students learn in different ways

In the learning process, learning style is used in a variety of ways. Each student has his or her own unique learning strengths and weaknesses. It is vital for the teachers to deliberately use a variety of learning strategies to reach the students' optimal achievement. The teacher should be aware that the ability and the way of students in studying are different. For example, in order to understand what the students are reading right now, they are doing something that works for them. Maybe they are reading this loudly or silently. Perhaps they are making

pictures on paper. Maybe they are reading this as they are walking. They might be reading all these in an orderly way, making a kind of outline in their head as they go along. Each of these ways is a different learning style. At presents, the teacher tends to apply only one way in teaching that is visual style. For example, the teacher teaches by using board, book and this is the visual style. Actually, using only one learning style can raise problem. Given (2002:122) says that one of the ways for the students to have their potential brain to get the information in the long-term memory is through their own learning style. Learning process with brain-based is the basic assumption in developing it that concerns on the unique of each learner. There are various learning styles that have been recognized by teachers and psychologist in foreign language learning related to the success of students' achievement. Brown (2008:138) states that visual and auditory learning styles of students are more dominant in formal classroom situation and visual learner is learning through seeing while auditory style is learning through hearing.

Therefore, the students can achieve the optimal achievement if they are well motivated, taught and appreciated their uniqueness. As result, the students are more comfortable when they use their own style because they understand the lessons easily. When they are comfortable, they are more receptive and find it easier to get involved with what they are studying. When they are involved with what they are studying, it doesn't feel like study. It becomes something enjoyable.

However, this study is intended to investigate the alternative learning strategies of vocabulary learning which can assist students to increase their

achievement in vocabulary that can be retrieved when needed. Therefore, the writer firmly believes that foreign language teachers must provide extensive practice to allow students to develop their four skills by enhancing their vocabulary and increasing retention throughout different techniques. This study focuses on Keyword Method and Mind Map among Senior High School students.

Keyword Method is one of Mnemonics devices for foreign language learning. It is designed to help students learn vocabulary. It has been shown to be effective over several other memorization strategies and proven to be successful to acquire more vocabulary and retain it for longer periods of time. It is an associative technique that makes use of acoustic and imagery links between the foreign word (English) with a word which is pronounced or spelt similarly in the mother tongue (Indonesian), but it is not necessarily related in terms of meaning. A link is then formed between the English word and its Indonesian meaning by creating an interactive image. For example, *distract* is the English word for *bother*. *Distract* is similar in sound to *distrap* (as the keyword that means *punish*). A student then can imagine someone who disturbs someone else will be punished.

The writer also investigates another alternative technique to boost with vocabulary learning namely Mind Map. It is the technique to remember new words by categorizing them into their groups. It helps students to remember by linking words and images in an intuitive way. For example, the word *furniture* and then radiating off with further subcategories and pictures of *bed* and *chair* until an exit is found.

The use of this activity is to minimize the stress burden that the students have when they are introduced to the new vocabulary. It also enables the students to use their brain ability effectively and efficiently to acquire foreign vocabulary as many as possible and then retain them in their long-term memory. It will also provide the students with enjoyable learning situation. Learning with fun makes the students happy to study, acquire and retain more vocabulary. Moreover, this study will explore which of both alternative learning strategies above is more effective on students' achievement in vocabulary.

Based on the background, the writer firmly believes that foreign language teachers must provide extensive techniques to allow students to develop their four language skills by increasing their vocabulary and retention through Keyword Method and Mind Map learning strategies that give the students the chance to facilitate learning and enhance their achievement.

Those learning strategies presumably will develop the students' achievement in vocabulary as opposed to conventional learning strategies. The learning strategies are also related to the students' achievement in vocabulary through their learning styles.

1.2 Identification of the Problems

Based on the explanation presented in the background above, the problem identification because of low achievement on English are: (1) Is the English teaching-learning process at SMA suitable with the demand of the curriculum 2006? (2) What learning strategies often used for enhancing students' vocabulary?

(3) Do other factors in learning strategy such as personality, motivation, and the ability to pay attention affect the student achievement in vocabulary? (4) Does keyword method improve the students' achievement in vocabulary? (5) Is there any difference in the students' achievement in vocabulary using keyword method and mind map? (6) Is there an influence on the students' achievement through their learning style? (7) Do different learning style and learning strategy cause the different achievement? (8) Can the teacher improve the students' achievement by knowing and modifying the learning style? (9) Do the students improve their achievement by knowing their style? (10) Does the students' background knowledge affect the students' learning style and achievement? (11) Does the students' characteristic as one of the variables of learning condition affect the students' achievement?

1.3 Problems of the Study

This study explores the effect of Keyword Method and Mind Map with visual and auditory students on students' achievement in vocabulary at Grade XI second semester. Thus, the writer attempts to find the answers to the following questions:

1. Is achievement in vocabulary of students taught by using Keyword Method higher than achievement in vocabulary of students taught by using Mind Map?
2. Is there any different achievement in vocabulary between students who have visual and auditory learning styles?

3. Is there any interaction between students' learning strategies and learning styles on their achievement in vocabulary?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

In general this study aims to obtain the description on the effect of certain learning strategies and learning styles on the students' achievement in vocabulary. In particular this study aims to explore:

1. Achievement in vocabulary of students taught by using Keyword Method is higher than the students' achievement in vocabulary of students taught by using Mind Map.
2. The different achievement in vocabulary between students who have visual and auditory learning styles.
3. The interaction between students' learning strategies and learning styles on students' achievement in vocabulary.

1.5 Scope of the Study

Actually there are many questions that should be answered related to learning strategy and learning style. The limitation of the location, research subject, time and the research variables cause this study to be narrowed down:

1. Students' achievement in vocabulary in cognitive domain with the English material at the Grade XI, second semester, 2009/2010 school year at SMAN16 Medan.

2. Learning strategies focused in this study are Keyword Method and Mind Map.
3. Learning styles are categorized on auditory and visual.
4. English material is based on the KTSP 2006 for the Grade XI students with the scope of vocabulary knowledge.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The result of this study is expected to be useful for both teachers and students theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the results of this study are expected to be useful for both teachers and students. It can also give a lot of positive contribution to the improvement of teachers' professionalism and the educational institution and other researchers who want to discover an in-depth research as the follow-up of the results of applying the learning strategies and learning styles and also the influence on the students' achievement in vocabulary.

Practically, these research findings hopefully will be useful for English teachers as alternative learning strategies in applying English materials. Moreover, it will give the description for the teachers about the affectivity of the application of the alternative learning strategies in applying English vocabulary based on the students' learning styles at SMA level. Meanwhile, students are also expected to take benefit from being taught by the techniques which have enhanced their amount of vocabularies without afraid of forgetting them.

