

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background of the Problem

In Indonesia, English is a compulsory subject for all students of high school. According to the SLTP Curriculum of 1994, the skills of English to be taught are reading, listening, speaking, and writing. It is also stated that the main objective of teaching English at high school is to enable the students to read English textbooks as a means to develop themselves in science, technology, and culture. Because of that reason, the students should have sufficient vocabulary.

Mary Finocchiaro in her book "Teaching English as a Second Language" says that the aim of the English teaching program should be developed for achieving the learners' four basic aspects of communication : listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In order that we can listen, speak, read, and write, we must have adequate vocabulary (Finocchiaro, 1969 : 8).

Krakowian in his article "The Teacher's Meditation in Students' Vocabulary Learning" (1984 : 72) states that learning a word should be continued until the student know how to use it in achieving communication. It means that the main purpose of learning vocabulary is to master the meaning of words as to understand and comprehend the reading text. The ability of comprehending the text depends on the mastery of not only the lexical but also structural meaning of the printed words. In this case, the teacher should guide the students to identify the words through context.

Based on the writer's experience during her PPL at SLTPK St. Vincentius, most of the students could not understand what the teacher says (listening skill), they can not understand the teacher words (reading skill), they can not express their ideas well both orally (speaking skill) and writtenly (writing skill). For this reason, vocabulary enrichment is very important. She also found out that the English teacher usually teaches vocabulary by giving a list of words to the students to memorize. By memorization, in fact, the students can keep the words for a few days but they are in difficulty keeping those words in mind for a longer time. In other words, the students can not retain the vocabulary that they have learnt.

Retention is a process of holding information which happens in human mind. Anita E. Woolfolk in her book "Educational Psychology" (1987 : 236) says that the information processing involves gathering and representing information, or encoding; holding information, or retention; and getting at the information when needed, or retrieval. Furthermore, Frederick J. McDonald says that retention is an observed behavior, and memory is the process we use to account for the observed behavior called retention (McDonald, 1966 : 64). Therefore, in line with those problems, the writer is encouraged to make a study entitled "Teaching Vocabulary through Reading Passages on SLTP Students' Vocabulary : its Effect on Retention Power".

1.2 Statement of the Problem

From the background of the problem, the writer formulates the problem of this study : *"What is the effect of teaching vocabulary through reading passages on SLTP students' vocabulary retention power compared to the one through reading passages along with word list?"*

1.3 Objective of the Study

In line with the statement of the problem, the objective of this study is to find the effect of teaching vocabulary through reading passages on SLTP students' vocabulary retention power compared to the one through reading passages along with word list.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Since teaching vocabulary is important to be done at SLTP, the writer expects that this suggested teaching technique can be applied as an alternative of teaching vocabulary in order to present the vocabulary more efficiently and effectively. Then the vocabulary that is taught can be put on the students' long term memory. Hopefully, later the students are able to understand and comprehend the reading text.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

Being aware that the vocabulary study is broad enough, the writer finds it is necessary to limit the scope to the written vocabulary and especially the synonym and antonym of the difficult words and their meanings. The types of reading passages to be used in this study is limited to simple reading materials relevant to the SLTP students' prior knowledge and ability.

1.6 Assumption

In this study, the following assumption have been made:

1. The second year students of SLTPK St. Vincentius as the sample of this research is assumed that they do not take any English courses outside the school.

2. The tests are valid representatives of the students' knowledge as the items are taken from the materials which are suitable to their previous knowledge.
3. The effectiveness of the technique used in this study is reflected by the scores of the testees.

1.7 Hypotheses

There are two hypotheses in this study. One is called the Null Hypothesis and the other is called the Alternative Hypothesis.

Ho : There is no significant difference between the vocabulary achievement of the students who are taught using reading passages and those who are not.

Ha : There is a significant difference between the vocabulary achievement of the students who are taught using reading passages and those who are not.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

It is necessary for the writer to provide the following key terms to avoid misunderstanding.

1. Vocabulary

Vocabulary is a total number of words (with rules for combining them) that make up a language. Some others state that vocabulary is a list of words and phrases, usually arranged alphabetically and defined or translated. In this study, the writer focuses her study on the reading vocabulary that Mangieri define as the printed words from which a child (someone) can derive the correct meaning. So, the meaning of the word can be determined from the familiar surrounding words or associated with the other words in context (Mangieri, 1982 : 41).

2. Reading Passages

Reading passages refer to the context in the form of reading materials (such as passages, composition, etc.) of which the sentences are related one with other.

3. Word List

Word list is a list containing sound or combination of sounds (on the written or printed symbols) forming a unit of grammar or vocabulary of a language.

4. Retention Power

According to the Meriam-Webster Dictionary, retention is an ability to retain thing in mind. Frederick J. McDonald in his book "Educational Psychology" says that retention is an observed behavior and memory is the process we use to account for the observed behavior (McDonald, 1966 : 64). In other words, it can be said that retention is a process of holding information which happens in the human mind. Anita E. Woolfolk says that the information processing involves gathering and representing information or encoding and getting the information when needed or retrieval (Woolfolk, 1987 : 36).

1.9 Organization of the Study

This study consists of five chapters, Chapter I, Introduction, deals with the background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, assumption, hypotheses, definition of key terms and organization of the study. Chapter II presents review of related literature and studies. Chapter III, Methodology, deals with research design, population and sample, instrument, treatment, procedure of collecting the data and technique of the data analysis. Chapter IV, is about research findings, dealing with result of data analysis,

hypothesis testing, and discussion of the findings. Conclusion is presented in the last chapter, Chapter V.