

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 The Background of the Study

Language is a means of human communication which consists of arbitrary symbols with meaning. The meanings are symbolized in words. Without words, language as a vocal means of communication will not function. In other words, no language exists without words (Napa, 1993:5).

Vocabulary which is one of the components of language is really important in communication because people primarily communicate by using words and they come into contact with other people in a community with words. The more words they have, the more easily they will understand and be understood by other people in their society. That is why every normal person is expected to keep increasing his vocabulary in line with the increase of the vocabulary of his language due to the development of science and technology (Shepherd, 1973:39). In the world of science, science can be achieved mostly by reading because reading can enrich the readers' vocabulary and knowledge as well. The reader, in this case the students, must know the meaning of words in the

sentences contained in the reading passage they are facing. However, sometimes, they are not interested in reading English books because they do not understand the meaning of many words contained in those books. They have difficulties in comprehending the reading passage because of their lack of vocabulary. As a result, they will not know and grasp all of information found in the passage and will not get the knowledge from the passage they are reading as well.

Dobson (1980: 152) states that one's vocabulary stock is very closely related to one's comprehension in reading because vocabulary or word meaning is an integral part of reading and every person should keep reading in order to increase his vocabulary. In reading, symbols or words are combined together into related ideas. Vocabulary, in this case symbols or words, will be meaningful to make up an idea if they are put in context because words get their exact and full meanings through context. Without context, words become ambiguous and open to many interpretations (Poespoprojo, 1980: 48). Words in isolation without any contexts are meaningless because students can only retain the words for short time and then they will forget them soon.

According to Baker (1972:72), context means surrounding words that are directly connected to a given

word and that add to its meaning. It means that there is a relationship between a certain word and its surrounding words or sentences. Thus the clues sometimes can provide the meaning of new words.

Vocabulary should be presented through context to enable the students retain the words for longer time. Segaran (1979:61) says that the teachers possibly make use of context to enable the students to identify the unfamiliar words. The students are expected to learn new words which are interrelated in the context.

According to Koh Moh Yin (1979: 79), knowing vocabulary should at least cover two things, understanding the meanings of the vocabulary items and then being able to use them correctly. It is also supported by Krakowian's opinion (1984:27) which says that learning a word should be continued until we know how to use it in achieving communication. It means that in being able to learn vocabulary, the students should acquire the lexical and structural meaning of words as well.

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 emphasizing the form and the meaning.

The teaching of vocabulary which is presented through context will be quite helpful to enrich the word power. Through context, the teacher will be able to help the students guess the meaning of unfamiliar words from the surrounding words, sentences and paragraphs.

Moreover, the academic course programme at the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University states that the main goal of teaching vocabulary is to enable the students to acquire the form and meaning of words in context, then use the words correctly which is in accordance with the given context.

Based on all of statements above and supported by the academic course programme of teaching vocabulary for students of English Department of Widya Mandala as the writer's reference, she chooses the reading passages as a means of teaching vocabulary in context for students of the English Department. Reading passages are meaningfully contextualized because all words are interrelated in context. The words found in the reading passages contain messages put in logically related sentences in which words play an important role as symbols of meaning. Through reading passages the students

are able to enrich their vocabulary and understand the new words without opening the dictionaries, i.e. just by reading it in context. Besides that, the students will be able to grasp the totality of word meanings of new or difficult words more easily in reading passages. And at last but not least they are able to comprehend the message and grasp the message found in the reading passages to increase their knowledge as well.

Based on the reasons above, the writer suggests a technique to make the teaching of English vocabulary more effective and efficient for students of English Department, that is "The Use of Reading Passages in Teaching Vocabulary for the Students of the English Department".

1.2 The Statement of the Problem

Based on the points presented as the background of this study, the main problems to be solved are formulated as follows:

- 1.2.1 What kinds of passages can be used for teaching vocabulary in the English Department ?
- 1.2.2 What is the procedure for teaching vocabulary by using the passages ?

1.3 The Objective of the Study

Being fully conscious of the important role of reading passages in the teaching of vocabulary in context, the writer decided to write the thesis entitled "The Use of Reading Passages in Teaching Vocabulary for the Students of the English Department" with the following objectives:

- 1.3.1 To describe the kinds of reading passages which can be used for teaching vocabulary in the English Department.
- 1.3.2 To elicit the procedure for teaching vocabulary by using reading passages.

1.4 The Significance of the Study

It is hoped that this study be useful as an alternative of teaching vocabulary in the English Department.

1.5 The Scope and Limitation of the Study

Being aware of how broad the topic of this study will be, the writer finds it necessary to limit the scope of this study. The reading passages under discussion are reading materials with various topics which are in accordance with the student's level of proficiency. The ideal subject of this study is the

students of the English Department in the first and second semester who are taking vocabulary course.

1.6 The Methodology

This study is a library research in which the writer collects theories and materials from books.

1.7 The Definition of Key Terms

There are some key terms that should be defined in order to avoid misunderstanding. Those terms will be explained as follows:

Vocabulary

According to Kufaishi (1988:2) vocabulary is the total number of words in a language an individual knows; and those words are used as a vehicle of the language to express one's idea. In other words, vocabulary is a number of words possessed by the students.

In this study the writer focuses her study on the reading vocabulary that Mangieri et.al. (1982:41) define as the printed words for which a child (anyone) can derive the correct meaning. Therefore, the meaning of a word can be determined from the familiar surrounding words or associated with the other words in context.

Reading Passages

A reading passage is a short article which is

organized in such a way to convey a certain information (as stated by Kho K.G. 1972:10). It is usually used for the students who learn the language in a reading comprehension class. It can be in the form of scientific articles, histories, short stories, anecdotes etc. Reading passages in this study refer to the intensive reading which is done inside the classroom. Besides that, reading passages refer to the context in the form of reading materials (such as passages, compositions and so on), of which the sentences are related one with the others.

Reading

According to Bouchard (1976:1) reading is a complex activity dependent upon the thinking and language skill of the reader. While Widdowson (1978:85) states that reading is not simply a matter of recognizing given and fixed meaning as they occur in context with their dictionary signification, but it is a matter of creating value by the process of active interpreting. Nutall (1982:10) states that reading is not just linguistic exercises, but it also involves getting the meaning from the text. Shepherd (1973:8) defines reading as the ability of the students to think about the information presented by the author. Thus, from the above statements, the writer concludes that reading means recognizing

relationship of elements of the text, and understanding ideas presented by the author, and getting the message of the text.

Teaching.

Kimble and Garnezy in Douglas Brown (1987:6) define teaching as showing or helping someone to learn how to do something, giving instructions, guiding in the study of something, providing with knowledge, causing to know or understand.

1.8 The Organization of the Study

There are five chapters presented in this study with the following organization : chapter I is the introduction which discusses about background of the study, statements of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, limitation of the study, methodology, definitions of key terms and organization of the study. Chapter II concerns with review of related literature. Chapter III deals with some considerations of using reading passages in the teaching of vocabulary. Chapter IV deals with the use of reading passages in the teaching of vocabulary, and chapter V deals with conclusion and suggestions.