

Chapter 1

Introduction

Background of the Study

In learning English in Elementary school, students are expected to memorize lists of words that are called vocabularies. Learning vocabulary is fundamental, important but difficult (Shen, 2003). To support development of the four language skills, vocabulary is an essential aspect (Rohania, 2007).

Vocabulary is one of the language components that supports the four language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Vocabulary is needed to achieve the target language. In order to communicate well in a foreign language, students should acquire an adequate number of words and should know how to use them accurately (Huyen, 2010).

Vocabulary plays an important role because if learners do not have the adequate vocabulary for communication, mastering grammatical rules or pronunciation becomes pointless. In teaching vocabulary, teachers should vary the techniques used, as Lopez (1997) states today's language teacher must manipulate much more information in several different areas of knowledge. A good store of words was crucial for

TEACHING VOCABULARY THROUGH MIND-MAPPING 2

understanding and communication. This underlined the importance of vocabulary in classroom teaching, as without vocabulary, it is difficult to communicate.

There are many techniques EFL teachers can use for making the students interested in learning vocabulary. When there is a word, which has been recognised as important in terms of its frequency of use of learners' needs, students might internationally make efforts to retain it (Shen, 2003).

Traditionally, vocabularies were taught using a word list when words were highlighted and learned by giving the meaning.

Vocabulary selection is based solely on the reading texts used, and words are taught by bilingual word-list, dictionary study, and memorization (Richards, 2001). This is aimed to make students remember and store in the memory, especially when is used for the beginner foreign learners. Shen (2003) states that word lists are usually used for raising the degree of recognition, retention, or memorization. Many language teachers and learners believe that the use of word-lists could increase students' vocabulary mastery quickly, and they can help students to memorize the definition of the word itself.

However, there is also an opposite belief concerning word lists. Many researchers argue that using word lists, or traditionally looking up words in dictionaries, would lead students to encounter disadvantages for long-term vocabulary learning.

Carely (1984: 335) in Shen (2003) mentioned that merely presenting a list of new or unfamiliar vocabulary items to be encountered in a text, even with definitions appropriate to their use in that text, does not guarantee the induction of new schemata. He indicates that the efficiency of the teaching of new vocabulary should be integrated with both students' pre-existing knowledge and other pre-reading activities designed to build background knowledge.

One of the techniques to integrate students' pre-existing knowledge to build background knowledge is by using mind-mapping techniques. According to Buzan (1993), mind mapping harnesses the full range of cortical skills – word, image, number, logic, rhythm, colour, and spatial awareness – in a single uniquely powerful technique. Mind mapping involves many aspects of the multiple intelligences (Hofland, 2007). He adds that brainstorming is also a particularly good technique for increasing self-esteem and confidence among students who might be slow at memorizing words but very good at expressing their ideas through images, rhythm, colour, and other spatial awareness. Through the brainstorming exercises, they would discover the vast potential of their associative machinery as well as gaining an insight into their own and other people's uniqueness as individuals (Buzan, 1993). The importance of being aware of the students' schemata cannot be

overemphasized, since more and more studies are showing that what we understand depends on what we know (Lopez, 1997).

Since second grade EFL students in general have difficulty in memorizing vocabulary, effective vocabulary mastery strategies, such as brainstorming, generating, and organizing words were needed to aid students in the memorization of vocabulary. EFL teachers should use various strategies to teach vocabulary. In brief, mind mapping is the technique where the students are given the chance to develop their ideas and visualize them through images, colour, and word drawings. In the English lesson, the children notice new words in patterns or images while they are creating a mind mapp. “We do not “teach” these words or patterns, we include them in activities and let the children notice them” (Paul, 2007).

Through this technique, the students would use their creativity to stimulate their right brain and left-brain. In mind mapping, they are free to use their minds in different ways and to create things or create word maps that relate to their feelings and experiences(Hofland, 2007). Creativity is a great motivator because it makes people interested in what they are doing.

Statement of the Problem

As previously discussed, the teaching method for vocabulary learning usually has been characterized by teacher-fronted, word-list memorization and monotonous activities. However, it is now commonly understood that learning takes place in social interaction and creativity. Rather than focusing on the lists of words that the students are supposed to memorize, creativeness provides more chances to encourage students' learning. Therefore, the writer finds that mind mapping techniques may become a good solution for students to overcome their difficulties in learning vocabulary.

Based on the background of study, the writer formulates the problem of the study that is "Is there any significant difference between the second grade students who are taught using mind mapping and those who are not with regard to their vocabulary mastery achievement?"

Purpose of the Study

The study is conducted to answer the research question (if there is any significant difference between those who were taught using mind mapping better in vocabulary mastery than those who were not with regard to their vocabulary mastery achievement). The writer is eager to know whether the students learning with mind mapping are able to understand the meaning of new vocabulary and whether the students learning

with mind mapping are able to use new vocabulary in context. This study is conducted with the expectation of giving contribution to teachers in varying the technique of teaching vocabulary used in the EFL School.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used in this study is schemata model. This theory emphasizes the recalling process of pre-existing knowledge in the human memory.

The acquisition of new knowledge is a great measure in vocabulary mastery. The total task of understanding new words depends on the distribution of information in the certain word, activation of information or 'schemata' in learners' mind. Thus, what learners think of a given word might vary considerably. Vocabulary mastery is a function of understanding the meaning of a word itself and of the extent to which the learner possesses, uses, and intergrates pertinent background knowledge or schemata.

Schemata in the human brain can be connected to anew knowledge. Some knowledge is basic and universal, new meanings associated with words they have already known and saved in their brain. Schemata can be defined as a pattern which represents the way experience and knowledge are organized in

the mind (Mayer, 1985). The schema for a concept like “groceries” can make thousand of associations in the mind, for instance it will be associated with “a little greengrocer” or about “a market”. Today, many references help teachers to get some solutions in making associations in students’ minds in the teaching learning process. The teachers can use some references to find out some references to find out some techniques of teaching in their classroom. There are many kinds of teaching techniques, such as story telling, games, songs, mind maps, mapping word. According to Brown (2004: 324), teaching vocabulary regains an important place in the language classroom, the issues, principles, and practice reviewed will become increasingly useful and significant. The concept of background knowledge, schemata, or patterns store in the mind and mind mapping helps to figure them out the paper.

Definition of the Key Terms

- (1) Vocabulary : The knowledge of new words learned in the foreign language in order to be understood in meaning and used in context
- (2) Vocabulary mastery : A total number of words which one student is able to memorize.

- (3) Schemata : Knowledge gained from experience, of the way the world is organized which is held as mental representation in the mind.
- (4) Mind mapping : refers to the teaching technique to represent students' understanding by using words, images, symbols, and colours in hierarchical or tree branch format.
- (5) Teaching strategy : A well-planned series of actions for achieving an aim.

Significance of the Study

- 1) Theoretically, the findings are expected to support the theory of schemata that stated that recalling process of pre-existing knowledge in the human memory, especially the experiences of the vocabulary that is going to be taught is crucial to effective vocabulary learning.
- 2) Practically, the data and information obtained from this study are expected to give a clear picture about the importance of schemata and the effectiveness of mind mapping technique for teaching vocabulary in Elementary. This picture is then expected to be a basis for helping the students become effective, independent readers.

Finally, the findings are expected to be useful for:

1) Students

The use of the mind mapping technique is a great way to improve the students' mastery in vocabulary so that they can enjoy learning vocabulary in activities, such as drawing, colouring, and symbolizing. Moreover, by experiencing the technique, they are expected to have an improvement in their mastery in English vocabulary, which appeared in the results of the study.

2) Teachers

It will give them a description of how to teach and to motivate the students to learn about English especially in vocabulary learning, they will not be stuck only in some particular teaching strategies. Mind mapping can be a good alternative or variation in teaching vocabulary, as it will make it enjoyable for the students to follow the lesson.

Delimitation and Limitation

According to Schmitt (2002), what vocabulary to focus on should be determined by two major considerations – the needs of the learners and the usefulness of the vocabulary

items. Mind mapping can be widely used to teach speaking, writing, and reading; however, this study is limited to its use in teaching vocabulary. The subjects are elementary aged students.

It is a quasi-experimental study within a delimited scope of sample using two groups of the second grade students of the Little Sun Elementary Students in the academic year 2014-2015.

The study itself is delimited to studying the effectiveness of mind mapping technique in terms of the students' vocabulary mastery and vocabulary behaviour (strategies).

Thesis Organization of the Thesis

This paper is developed into five chapters:

Chapter 1 covers the introduction: general background of the study, statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, theoretical framework, definitions of key terms, significance of the study, delimitation and limitation, and thesis organization.

Chapter 2 contains review of related literature. It is consisted of ten sections. The first section is about general concepts of learning vocabulary, the second is about accessing

and assessing existing vocabulary, the third is about schemata in vocabulary learning, the fourth is about schemata theories, fifth is the concept of mind mapping technique, sixth is theories underlying mind mapping technique, the seventh is about a teaching model of mind maps, the eighth is about the advantages and disadvantages of mind mapping, the ninth is about a previous study from some writers that underlined the topic of this study, the tenth is the hypothesis formulated about this study.

Chapter 3 talks about the method of study that consisted of research design, population and sample, instrument of the study, test specification, validity and reliability, technique of collecting data, procedure of data collection, and data analysis.

Chapter 4 is about result of the study and discussion of the findings.

Chapter 5 is the conclusion and the suggestion based on the research finding.