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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

I.1. The Background of the Research

Language is the great part in our life. It is the key of communication. Without language, we cannot communicate each other clearly. Nowadays, English is one of the international languages taught at schools. It becomes the first foreign language that is taught in Indonesia from elementary school up to college. In junior high school, English lesson is taught four class-hours a week. It is one of the important subjects that becomes a subject for a national final test.

English consists of four skills. They are listening, reading, writing and speaking. All of the skills should be mastered by students. Reading is an essential skill for all students at all levels started from elementary school up to university. According to Nunan (2003), reading is a set of skills that involves making sense and deriving meaning from printed words. In other words, the readers must be able to decode (sound out) the printed words and also comprehend what they read.

Reading comprehension is one of the basic skills to be acquired during a language course. It may be the least teachable of the four language skills. In teaching and learning language in schools, reading should used as a basic skill to help students catch knowledge. As teachers, they should be able to understand the students' ability about reading comprehension.



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Furthermore, vocabulary is one of the English components or sub skill that must be taught to the learners, because vocabulary has the primary role of all skills. It should be mastered by all of the language learners. Learning vocabulary is a very crucial part to learn a language. It is a key for the students to understand what they hear, write and read. Students use vocabulary to understand and use words to acquire and convey meaning. Vocabulary plays a fundamental role in the reading process, and contributes greatly to a reader's comprehension. A reader cannot understand a text without knowing what most of the words mean. In relation to the idea above, Davis (1968; in Allen, 1999:7) points out "vocabulary affects comprehension".

Vocabulary is one of the crucial components of language. There is no language that exists without a word. The more words, we learn, the more ideas we will have. Without mastering vocabulary, it is impossible to master English well, because it is the core component of all skills of English. It is supported by Johnson (2008:93) that vocabulary is an important part of enhancing students' ability to read, to write, to speak, to listen and to think. So, the more students understand the vocabulary, it will increase their English proficiency.

From the explanation above, it is clear that vocabulary is very useful for mastering all skills in English. Especially for reading, the learners need to understand the vocabulary well, because the reading goal is to read for meaning or to recreate the writer's meaning. In short, reading involves

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comprehension, when the readers cannot comprehend, they are not reading. In fact, to comprehend the text, the readers need to understand the meaning of words in the text. They should find the meaning of words or imply their prediction to understand the meaning of words in the text.

As reported in the Jakarta Post (August 29,2016), the rank of Indonesia in terms of reading interest is 60 from 61 countries based on Central Connecticut State University in the US has revealed. While, in terms of infrastructure to support reading researched by dubbing World's Most Literate Nation, Indonesia is below Thailand in 59th and above Botswana in 61st position. So, it proves that Indonesian students still have problems in terms of reading.

Then, according to Fan (2003) in Wan Julia Mayasari, in Asian countries, vocabulary seems to be given little emphasis in the curriculum. In other words, it needs the teacher's role to develop their vocabulary material.

State Junior High School 1 Singingi is one of the schools located in Kuansing Regency. As one of the formal schools, English has become a compulsory subject to be taught in this school. In 2013 curriculum, English is one of the primary subjects that must taught by teachers to students. In State Junior High School 1 Singingi Kuansing Regency, English is taught and learned in all grades, from the first up to the third grade. English taught fourth a week with duration of time 45 minutes for one meeting. Based on the syllabus, it was stated that the core competence

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of English was understood and applying the factual, conceptual, and procedural social science based on the expectation that the students wanted to know about knowledge, technology, art, and culture.

Based on the observation on July 2016 at State Junior High School 1 Singingi Kuansing Regency, it faced many problems of learning English in this school. The students still had many problems, especially in terms of vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension.

In terms of vocabulary, the students had a lack of vocabulary. Then, if the students found an unfamiliar word, they can't find the meaning. They did not imply their prediction in finding out and understanding the meaning of the text, they always used dictionary as the best way to solve their low vocabulary mastery in understanding the text of the reading.

Thus, they were not able to find out the synonym or antonym of the certain words and identify the meaning of words in the text. Consequently, it affects their reading comprehension. Most of the students were not able to getting the main idea, detail information and the value of the text. Indeed, they couldn't identify the generic structure of the text. It can state that the students also have problems in reading comprehension. However, in fact, some of the students got good scores in answering the questions of reading tasks. They could comprehend the text, whereas they had a lack of vocabulary. As we know that, vocabulary is needed in comprehending the text

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Based on the phenomena depicted above, generally, it can be stated that some of the students at State Junior High School 1 Singingi Kuantan Singingi Regency still have problem in terms of vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension in learning English. Actually, the teacher gave some of the supported programs to increase their vocabulary and reading comprehension, such as English course and English day in two days a week. Through these programs, the students are hoped to able to have many vocabularies in order to able to comprehend the text. However, there were some of the students who still have problems in terms of vocabulary.

The problems could be indicated based on the following phenomena; some of students were not able to find out the synonym and antonym of the certain words, some of students were not able to identify the meaning of words in the text, some of students were not able to answer the questions related to the content of the text given, some of students were not able to identify language feature of the text, some of students were not able to identify the main ideas of the text, some of students were not able to identify the generic structure of the text, etc.

There is actually a strategy to improve students' vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension. This strategy is called Semantic Mapping Strategy. It is a useful strategy that can be introduced to learners. It involves drawing a diagram of the relationships ideas according to their use in a particular text. Semantic mapping has the effect of bringing relationships in a text to consciousness for the purpose of deepening the

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understanding of a text and creating associative networks for words. It is the best strategy as a collaborative effort between the teacher and the class (Stahl & Vancil, 1986, cited in Nation & Newton, 1997).

The major purpose of the semantic map is to allow students to organize their prior knowledge into these formal relations and thus to provide themselves a basis for understanding what they read and learn. Comprehension can be thought of as the elaboration and refinement of prior knowledge. What the semantic map provides is a graphic structure of that knowledge to be used as the basis for organizing new ideas as they are understood. It motivates the students to connect their prior knowledge to new words and to see the lexical or conceptual relationships among words.

In a guided semantic mapping, learners work with the teacher to develop a semantic map around a topic, the teacher deliberately introduces several target items and puts them on the map as well as elaborating on them with the learners who then use the semantic map to check their comprehension. If the semantic map is done in a group, a learner in the group can be assigned to ensure that the target words are used.

Semantic mapping generally refers to brainstorming associations which a word has and then diagramming the results (Sokmen, 1997). Johnson, Pittelman and Heimlich (1986) described semantic mapping as “categorical structuring of information in graphic form”. Semantic mapping is one of word association strategies. It is defined as a technique to make arrangement of words into a diagram, which has a key concept at

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the center or at the top, and related words and concepts linked to the key concept by means of lines or arrows (Gairns and Redman, 1986).

Thus, the writer is interested in conducting a research entitled: “The Effect of Using Semantic Mapping Strategy on Students’ Vocabulary mastery and Their Reading Comprehension at State Junior High School 1 Singingi Kuansing Regency”.

I.2. Statement of the Problem

Reading comprehension is the process by which the person understands the meaning of written language. Tankersley (2003:90) states that reading comprehension is the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. Based on the explanation above, the writer concludes that comprehension is the process in which the reader brings his or her prior knowledge to interact with the written text.

Reading comprehension is not easy to do because in reading process the reader not only reads the words, sentences, paragraphs, and texts but also should comprehend what the content of reading is. So, to comprehend the text, the students should understand the vocabulary used. Vocabulary plays a fundamental role in the reading process, and contributes greatly to a reader’s comprehension.

The problem of this study was that some of the eighth grade students did not understand about reading text given by the teacher, they did not find the detail information of the text, such as main idea, topic, and the

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value of the text. In short, they were not able to comprehend the text given by the teacher.

Besides, they had a lack of vocabulary. They did not imply their prediction in finding out and understanding the meaning of the text. They did not find out the synonym or antonym of the certain words. Some of students were not able to identify the meaning of words in the text. Consequently, there were some of the students who could not achieve the passing grade. Hence, the teacher needs an appropriate strategy which emphasizes the function of the teacher to develop the students' reading comprehension and their vocabulary.

In this case, some questions need to be addressed. For vocabulary mastery; What factors cause their lack of vocabulary? Why do the students get difficulties in identifying the synonym of certain words in the text? Why do the students get difficulties in identifying the antonym of certain words in the text? Is the Semantic Mapping strategy effective to increase students' vocabulary mastery? How can teachers increase vocabulary in reading class?

While, for reading comprehension; How do the students use their vocabulary mastery in comprehending the text? Why do the students get difficulties in identifying the generic structure of the text? Why do the students get difficulties in answering the question related to the text? Why do the students get difficulties in identifying the moral value of the text? Is

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the Semantic Mapping strategy effectiveness to increase students' vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension?

Actually, it is important for teachers and learners to understand the goal of language teaching and learning. Liu (2003), the goal of language teaching is to develop learners communicative competence. As stated above, as a teacher, when selecting learning activities, we need to remember that our goal is providing students interact freely with others.

I.3. The limitation of the Problem

There are many problems that can influence students' vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension such as the problems of students, teachers, facilities, teaching strategies, etc. This study focuses on the problems that relate to the vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. This research has investigated the effect of using Semantic Mapping Strategy on students' vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension. It has been conducted at State junior high school 1 Singingi. The sample of this research was the eight grade students of State junior high school 1 Singingi.

I.4. The Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to determine the effect of using Semantic Mapping strategy on students' vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension at State Junior High School 1 Singingi Kuantan Singingi Regency. The objectives of this research were as follows:

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- a. To find out the difference of students' vocabulary mastery pre test mean score between the experimental group and the control group at at State Junior High School 1 Singingi Kuantan Singingi Regency.
- b. To find out the difference of students' vocabulary mastery post test mean score between the experimental group and the control group at at State Junior High School 1 Singingi Kuantan Singingi Regency.
- c. To find out the difference of students' vocabulary mastery between pre-test and the post - test mean score in the experimental group at at State Junior High School 1 Singingi Kuantan Singingi Regency.
- d. To find out the difference of students' vocabulary mastery between pre-test and post-test mean score in the control group at at State Junior High School 1 Singingi Kuantan Singingi Regency.
- e. To find out the difference of students' reading comprehension, pre test mean score between the experimental group and the control group at at State Junior High School 1 Singingi Kuantan Singingi Regency.
- f. To find out the difference of students' reading comprehension post test mean score between the experimental group and the control group at at State Junior High School 1 Singingi Kuantan Singingi Regency.
- g. To find out the difference of students' reading comprehension between pre-test and post - test mean score in the experimental group at at State Junior High School 1 Singingi Kuantan Singingi Regency.

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- h. To find out the difference of students' reading comprehension between pre-test and post - test mean score in the control group at State Junior High School 1 Singingi Kuantan Singingi Regency.

I.5. Research Question

- a. Is there a significant difference of students' vocabulary mastery pre test mean score between the experimental group and the control group at State Junior High School 1 Singingi Kuantan Singingi Regency?
- b. Is there a significant difference of students' vocabulary mastery post test mean score between the experimental group and the control group at State Junior High School 1 Singingi Kuantan Singingi Regency?
- c. Is there a significant difference of students' vocabulary mastery between pre-test and post - test mean score in the experimental group at State Junior High School 1 Singingi Kuantan Singingi Regency?
- d. Is there a significant difference of students' vocabulary mastery between pre-test and post-test mean score in the control group at State Junior High School 1 Singingi Kuantan Singingi Regency?
- e. Is there a significant difference of students' reading comprehension pre test mean score between the experimental group and the control group at State Junior High School 1 Singingi Kuantan Singingi Regency?
- f. Is there a significant difference of students' reading comprehension post test mean score between the experimental group and the control group at at State Junior High School 1 Singingi Kuantan Singingi Regency?

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- g. Is there a significant difference of students' reading comprehension between pre-test and post - test mean score in the experimental group at State Junior High School 1 Singingi Kuantan Singingi Regency?
- h. Is there a significant difference of students' reading comprehension between pre-test and the post - test mean score in the control group at at State Junior High School 1 Singingi Kuantan Singingi Regency?

I.6. Significance of the Study

This study was to investigate whether the use of Semantic Mapping strategy gave an effect toward the students' vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension at State Junior High School 1 Singingi Kuantan Singingi Regency. Hopefully, this research was able to benefit the writer as novice researcher, especially in learning how to conduct a research. Thus, the research findings were also expected to be useful and valuable, especially for students and teachers of English at State Junior High School 1 Singingi Kuantan Singingi Regency to be considerations for their future teaching learning process. Besides, the research findings were also expected to be positive and valuable information for those who were concerned with the role of teaching and learning English as foreign or second language. Finally, this research findings were also expected to be critical and theoretical information to the development of theories of language teaching.

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I.7. Rationale of the study

The correlation between word knowledge and reading comprehension has been documented in studies for over 50 years. The students with stronger vocabularies have better comprehension than those with weaker word knowledge. Wallace (2008) points out that difficulty in reading is perhaps due to the lack of sufficient vocabulary. Boulware Gooden, R., Suzanne Carreker, S., Ann Thornhill, A., et al (2007) clarifies that comprehension is the reason for reading and vocabulary plays significance role.

Semantic mapping is an activity that helps bring into consciousness, relationships among words in a text and helps deepen understanding by creating associative networks for words. A text is chosen based on the words to be learnt and students are asked to draw a diagram of the relationship between particular words found in the text.

I.8. Definition of the Term

1. Effect

According to Jack C. Richards (2002:175), Effect is a measure of the strength one variable's effect on another or the relationship between two or more variables. In this research, an effect is defined as the result of teaching treated Possible Sentence strategy.

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2. Semantic Mapping Strategy

According to Raymond C. Jones, semantic map is known as a graphic representation which gives the main ideas of a certain topic and how it is connected. While, According to Taricani, & Ellen(2000), semantic maps is a strategy for present the structure of main ideas visually and also the relationships between them. It generally refers to brainstorming associations which a word has and then diagramming the results (Sokmen:1997). In this research, it is used by the writer to develop students' vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension of the eight grade at Junior High School 1 Singingi Kuantan Singingi Regency.

3. Vocabulary

According to Nunan (2005:121), vocabulary is the collection of word that an individual knows. While, vocabulary refers to effective word/idiom choice and usage, word form mastery, appropriate spelling,etc.

4. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is defined as the level of understanding of a passage or text. Scott G. Paris and Steven A. Stahl (2005:134), defines that reading comprehension is the ability to identify meaningful relations between the various parts of a text and between these parts and the readers' background knowledge.