

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background of the research, the limitation of the research, the formulation of the research, the objectives of the research, and the significance of the research.

### A. Background of the Research

Vocabulary is an essential aspect of language development (Linse, 2005). Learning a language is not only about understanding grammar and structure; vocabulary also becomes a crucial part of the language to be discovered. According to (Susanto, 2017), vocabulary acquisition plays a vital role in language learning. A learner with a small vocabulary size will not perform well in every aspect of language. On the other hand, vocabulary is the first aspect that the students must learn if they are learning a language. Therefore, they would find difficulties learning a language if they lacked vocabulary.

Teaching young learners is essential because they must be prepared with much vocabulary before learning the language. The other reason is that children can memorize better than adults. So, it is better to be prepared for young learners, so they should learn vocabulary and increase their vocabulary mastery. Young learners are students between the ages of 5 to 12 years old (Cameron, 2001). Introducing English to young learners is a challenging job (Awaludin, 2013). It is not accessible to teach English to young learners. Something interesting should be brought inside the classroom to make the

students focus. Young learners have different characteristics from an adult. They are easy to feel bored and distracted. It is normal because they are playful. So, the teacher must create an ideal situation to make students comfortable. It can be an online or offline situation. However, the perfect position for children is offline because they become more interactive. They can interact with the teacher and their friends. Students can share their ideas with friends and ask the teacher questions directly. In offline situations, the teachers are easy to take control of the students and the activities in the class.

Moreover, the teacher needs a variety of activities to keep students' interests and attention alive (Brown, 2001). There are many activities for teaching vocabulary in the classroom. Teaching vocabulary is similar to other teaching activities using specific methods and material. Teaching vocabulary to young learners needs an appropriate strategy to gain their interest. The technique or strategy should be chosen and determined before teaching. It is one of the essential factors in teaching vocabulary because it controls most teaching and learning activities in the classroom. Empirically validated vocabulary-building strategies and suggested activities for teaching vocabulary are presented in the following categories: drama, semantic mapping, video technology, and the keyword method (Foil & Alber, 2002).

This research focused on applying semantics mapping to teaching vocabulary to young learners. Semantics mapping is one of the potential strategies for teaching vocabulary. Semantics mapping is a visual strategy for vocabulary expansion and extension of knowledge by displaying in categories

words related to one another (Khoii & Sharififar, 2013). The teacher can use semantic mapping to teach vocabulary. It makes the students discover the conceptual relationship between vocabulary. Semantics mapping is a simple strategy for teaching vocabulary to young learners. The teacher gives a keyword and other target words related to the materials. Those words write down on a whiteboard or paper, and the students are asked to look for other words related to the keyword.

Some researchers have applied semantics mapping to teaching vocabulary. The previous study by (Na & Na, 2019) found that semantics mapping positively impacts students` vocabulary learning results. It makes students active in the class and increases students` interest in learning vocabulary. The other research (Nilforoushan, 2012) found that semantics mapping gives students better vocabulary knowledge and improved deep vocabulary mastery. Semantics mapping is beneficial for teaching vocabulary because it creates a new context and makes learning more enjoyable. And then, the research by (Margosein et al., 1982) shows that semantics mapping treatment produced significantly higher scores than context clue condition. Semantics mapping positively impacts specific and generalized vocabulary acquisition more than the context clue approach. The result of the previous study above showed that semantics mapping has a positive impact on students` vocabulary.

English has been taught in junior high school as the main subject. It is different from the elementary level. English at the elementary school level did not include the main subject. So, not all elementary schools teach English to students. For some students, English is a new subject, so they need to start learning from the basics. Vocabulary is one of the primary aspects that must be mastered by students when learning English. Therefore, vocabulary mastery is crucial for junior high school students, especially in grade 7. Students in grade 7 are included in the category of young learners because their ages are 12 years old. According to the student's character, the researchers focused on applying semantics mapping for teaching vocabulary for the seventh-grade students of mts n 1 pacitan.

Based on the obstacles and problems in the teaching-learning process discussed above, the Researcher designed classroom action research (CAR). Classroom action research is used because this research is intended to solve the problem and repair the performance of the learning process in the classroom. The Researcher used semantics mapping as the strategy for teaching vocabulary to the seventh grades students. It may help the teacher to teach vocabulary and improve students` performance. Semantics mapping gives chances for students to explore the related word. It also makes students creative and active in the classroom. Moreover, the Researcher thought that semantics mapping is an effective and fun way to teach junior high school students vocabulary. So, the researchers argued that the semantics mapping strategy positively impacts students' vocabulary mastery.

## **B. Identification of the Problem**

According to the background of the study, the Researcher identifies some problems. Students between ages 5 to 12 years old or young learners are playful and easy to get bored. They are also easy to distract if the situation is uncontrolled. They will be bored with conventional methods. They need various learning activities that stimulate their creativity. Teaching vocabulary to young learners should be fun and creative. Teaching strategy is crucial because it controls most teaching-learning activities in the class. Finally, the teachers should implement an appropriate strategy for teaching vocabulary to young learners. With this phenomenon, semantics mapping is potentially an activity teaching vocabulary for the seventh-grade students categorized as young learners.

## **C. Limitation of the Study**

Based on the problems above, the Researcher makes limitations to get an in-depth investigation. It is limited to investigating the application of semantics mapping to teaching vocabulary to the seventh grades students of MTs N 1 Pacitan in the academic year of 2021/2022. It also investigates the students` responses toward semantics mapping to teaching vocabulary.

#### **D. Statement of the Problem**

Based on the limitation of the study, the statements of the problem are:

1. What does the application of semantics mapping can improve students' vocabulary mastery for the seventh-grade students of MTs N 1 Pacitan in the academic year of 2021/2022?
2. How are the students' responses toward semantics mapping to teaching vocabulary to the seventh-grade students of MTs N 1 Pacitan in the academic year of 2021/2022?

#### **E. Objectives of the Research**

Based on the statement of the problem, the objectives of the study are:

1. To determine whether the semantics mapping can improve students' vocabulary mastery in the seventh-grade students of MTs N 1 Pacitan in the academic year 2021/2022.
2. To know the students' responses toward semantics mapping to teaching vocabulary to the seventh-grade students of MTs N 1 Pacitan in academic years 2021/2022.

#### **F. Significances of the Research**

1. Theoretically

The result of this research is expected to contribute to the development of knowledge in the field of education. This research is expected to be a reference in conducting similar research on semantics mapping strategy.

## 2. Practically

### a. English teachers

For the English teacher, this research's results can be used as a reference for vocabulary teaching-learning. Moreover, it also helps the teacher to implement the appropriate vocabulary teaching learning

### b. The students

This research is also beneficial for the students. It is intended to create adequate vocabulary learning to develop their vocabulary mastery.

### c. The institution

This research is expected to be a source of information for the school to improve teaching techniques, especially in teaching vocabulary

### d. Other researchers

This research is expected to reference other researchers who have the same interest in teaching vocabulary activities.

