

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of the background of study, the formulation of research problem, research objective, research hypothesis, significance of the research, scope and limitation of the research, and definition of key terms.

A. Background of the Study

Vocabulary takes an important role in the context of learning new language, especially English. In learning English, the students should have ability in vocabulary. Vocabulary is one of the elements that cannot be separated with language learning as it links the four language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Vocabulary mastery must be acquired by students to get those competencies. In other words, vocabulary takes an important role in mastering the four basic skills of English. Cameron (2001) states that building up a useful vocabulary is central to the learning of foreign language. It means that the students will lose their motivation and interest in learning English if they do not expand their vocabulary.

Vocabulary also becomes the important aspect in learning a foreign language. The students will improve much if they learn more words and expressions. Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without

vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. It means that vocabularies are the flesh of language while grammar is the skeleton. So, in order to be able to use the language productively, the students have to know certain amount of vocabularies. According to Richard (1997) it is vital to know a lot of words if we want to make progress in a foreign language. Even your grammar excellent, you will not be able to communicate your meaning without a wide vocabulary. In addition, Allen (1983) states that to master over a language, the learners must learn thousands of words. McCharty and O'dell (2007) also states that although people have already known hundreds of English words, but to speak and to write in normal situations, they need at least 1-2000 words. It means that the learners should have many vocabularies to support their ability in mastering English.

An adequate vocabulary is essential for successful second language use. It means that the students will be successful in learning English if they have adequate vocabulary. When the students begin to learn this language, the students should comprehend much vocabularies. Vocabulary can help students to use language through communication and to understand what is being read or listened. According to Abdul Gafoor and Remia (2013), the children will be more confident in speaking and writing in the target language if they have a wide range of vocabulary. Embi and Mohd Amin (2010) say that it is essential for foreign language learners to have a wide range of vocabulary as it helps them to communicate effectively in the target language. Laufer (1997) also states that vocabulary learning is the heart of

language learning and language use. If the students do not know the meaning of the words, they do not know how to construct meaning for the words. So, they will not be able to comprehend the text.

In fact, in daily classroom activity, the students often find difficulty in learning vocabulary. English vocabulary is complex with three main aspects related to form, meaning, and use as well as layers of meaning connected to the roots of individual words (Nation and Meara, 2010). It means that when the students are learning vocabulary, it is not just about words, but it involves lexical phrases and knowledge of English vocabulary. Another difficulty that faced by students is the number of words that students need to learn is exceedingly large. There are a lot of words in English compared with many other languages and it is impossible to know them all. Then, another factor that makes difficult in learning vocabulary is the differences between spoken English and written or 'literate' English. The vocabulary of written English, particularly the 'literate' English that students encounter in textbooks and other school materials, differs greatly from that of spoken.

In addition, the biggest factor that contributes to the students' difficulties in learning English is the limited of vocabulary itself. Mohamad Nor, Mazlan, & Rajab (2015) state that the biggest difficulty for ESL learners is limited vocabulary. They also explore that learners face difficulties due to lack of vocabulary, especially in listening and speaking skill. This condition causes English likely becomes something too hard to

learn and make the students difficult in mastering English well. The students with limited vocabulary find themselves struggling to read, write, listen, and speak English. Besides, it make them difficult to understand some words in a context and they do not have enough yet words to say what they want to say. Furthermore, in communication, the students need vocabulary which can support them to produce a use meaningful sentences. Therefore, the students have to develop their vocabulary and master it in order to be able to communicate each other.

In learning vocabulary, it is important for the teachers apply an interesting strategy to teach vocabulary effectively. Goodson, Layzer, Simon, & Dwyer (2009) state that the students build a larger vocabulary from the language used by people around them. The teachers should work on strategies and activities that can help the students to enhance their vocabulary. Sometimes, in learning vocabulary the English teacher still asks the students to write some new words in a note and they have to memorize what they have already wrote. This strategy often makes students feel bored in learning vocabulary in the classroom. It means that the English instruction in the classroom has not yet been effective because the strategy that are applied are monotonous. Harmer (1998) states that English teachers should make their lesson interesting so that the students do not fell asleep and bored. By using interesting strategy, the students are expected to understand the lesson easily and they can improve their motivation in learning vocabulary. Therefore, using variety and interesting strategy in the

classroom especially in learning vocabulary should be considered in order to make the teaching learning process become efficient and effective. Furthermore, the purpose of teaching learning process can be achieved. Thus, it is important for the teachers who teach English to apply a certain strategy in learning process which can encourage students' motivation and interest, especially in vocabulary.

There are many strategies which help students to learn vocabulary, such as Word Mapping, Graphic Morphemic Analysis, Interactive Word Wall, Vocabulary Journals, and Semantic Feature Analysis. In this study, the researcher tries to use Semantic Feature Analysis (SFA) strategy. Semantic Feature Analysis (SFA) is a good way to enhance comprehension and vocabulary skill. Fenton (2006) states that Semantic Feature Analysis is a good way to build prior knowledge and reinforce vocabulary. When the students use this strategy the students will comprehend the vocabulary better. By doing so, the students are able to explore connections, make predictions, and master important concepts. Antonacci & O'Callaghan (2011) also explain that teaching vocabulary in context has a strong research base and is more effective than giving definitions. Semantic Feature Analysis is one of the most literacy strategy teach words as concepts and linking new information with background knowledge. In addition, Ditkson (2007) explains that Semantic Feature Analysis uses a matrix that compares the terminology of a subject by its features or characteristics. This strategy also help students to understand the meaning of new vocabulary words.

Thus, by using Semantic Feature Analysis the students will be easy to find meaning of new words.

Furthermore, Semantic Feature Analysis prompts students to compare the similarities and differences between words and as they sort ideas into categories. It means that by using this strategy, it can help students to compare the characteristics that enables students to see how words are related. Glasswell (2011) states that the grid for SFA is simple to use. On the grid, the key vocabulary terms are listed down the left hand side (for example various key words or terms or select phrases from a text) and then features related to define the words are listed along the top of the grid (for example types of figurative language). After that, the students complete the grid by carefully considering the feature options and placing a tick, a cross, or blank in the grid to indicate whether or not the word might be usefully defined in terms of that feature. If the feature fits somewhat or the students are unsure, they can put a dash.

There are several previous studies related to this study. The first research was conducted by Anders (1983) on the reading comprehension. The result showed that Semantic Feature Analysis is significantly improve the reading comprehension of adolescent learning disabled readers. The second research in Semantic Feature Analysis was conducted by Rider (2008) who used Semantic Feature Analysis to improve contextual discourse in adults with aphasia. The result showed that Semantic Feature Analysis improves confrontational naming ability and may benefit word

retrieval in discourse production of closed-set contexts. Zahra, Nahid, Amin, and Leila (2017) also conducted a research to compare the effectiveness of Semantic Feature Analysis (SFA) and Phonological Components Analysis (PCA) for anomia treatment in Persian speaking patients with aphasia. The result showed that both SFA and PCA treatments have the potential to improve naming ability in participants. A study also done by Van Heesab, Angwinb, McMahonc, and Copland (2013) examined eight people with aphasia who each received 12 treatment sessions. Half of the sessions included semantically-based treatment task using Semantic Feature Analysis. They saw improve in the people who participated in SFA. Their word use increased.

Reviewing from Anders (1983) who conducted Semantic Feature Analysis on the reading comprehension, the result showed that Semantic Feature Analysis is significantly improve their reading comprehension of adolescent learning disabled readers. In her study, she found that some of students reported that they would rather look words up in the dictionary, because it was easier to look words up than to participate in the SFA activity, but several students volunteered positive reactions that SFA is a great activity. However, she suggests that Semantic Feature Analysis is a useful strategy for teaching vocabulary. In other words, the future study may investigate whether the SFA activity facilitates the vocabulary acquisition.

The purpose of this current study is to determine whether using SFA strategy is effective on students' vocabulary acquisition. The use of

Semantic Feature Analysis on students' vocabulary not just help the students to further enhance the vocabulary words, but also simultaneously allows them to explore how sets one of things are related to another. By completing and analyzing the grid, the students are able to see connections, make predictions, master important concepts, and make them easier to find meaning of new words. Thus, to make students are interested in learning vocabulary, SFA is one of vocabulary strategy that can be applied by teachers in the classroom. In the end, by using SFA strategy, the students' vocabulary will improve and SFA can be an interesting subject for students.

B. Formulation of Research Problem

The formulation of research problem is stated as follows:

Is there any significant difference on students' vocabulary acquisition before and after being taught by using Semantic Feature Analysis?

C. Objective of the Research

The objective of the research is to find out whether using Semantic Feature Analysis is effective to students' vocabulary acquisition at second grade of MTs Darul Huda.

D. Significance of the Research

For the students, using Semantic Feature Analysis can motivate the students in order to be more interested and more enthusiastic in learning vocabulary. Semantic Feature Analysis is not only a good strategy to enhance vocabulary skill, but the students can build their prior knowledge,

explore connections, and master important concept. In addition, the students can see how sets of things are related to another.

For the teacher, this study can be used as new paradigm in English language learning and provide the better strategy on the students' vocabulary acquisition in Junior High School. It means that the teacher can use Semantic Feature Analysis as one of the strategy in teaching vocabulary than using conventional method. In this case, the teacher is not only help the students to improve their vocabulary acquisition, but they can teach words as concepts and linking new information with background knowledge. Besides, the teacher can use this strategy for the whole group, small group, or individual.

The researcher also hopes that the result of the research can be used as reference for those who want to conduct a research. It means that the other researchers can conduct further research related with Semantic Feature Analysis in different area of teaching or in similar area by using a different methodology.

E. Scope and Limitation

This research is only conducted to the second grade of MTs Darul Huda. The limitation of subject is English which focuses on students' vocabulary acquisition especially dealing with the concrete vocabulary. The researcher uses Semantic Feature Analysis to improve students' vocabulary acquisition.

F. Hypothesis

Hypothesis is tentative answer of variable in which the truth must be tested, based on the previous statement. To get the answer of the question, the researcher should propose alternative hypothesis (H_a) and null hypothesis (H_0). Those are explained as follow:

1. The alternative hypothesis (H_a) states that there is significant difference score of students' vocabulary acquisition before and after being taught by using Semantic Feature Analysis strategy.
2. The null hypothesis (H_0) states that there is no significant difference score of students' vocabulary acquisition before and after being taught by using Semantic Feature Analysis strategy.

G. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding of the concept that used in this study, it is necessary for the researcher to provide some definition of the terms.

Those are:

1. Effectiveness

The effectiveness of this research means the significant score of students' vocabulary acquisition who are taught by using Semantic Feature Analysis strategy.

2. Semantic Feature Analysis

Semantic Feature Analysis is one of strategy that help students to reinforce vocabulary and categorization skill, understand the similarities

and the differences in related, expand, and retain content between vocabulary and the concepts of students.

3. Vocabulary Acquisition

Vocabulary acquisition is the vocabulary of the students after getting treatment by using Semantic Feature Analysis which is indicate the better score in the post-test than in the pre-test.