

I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the background of the problem, which includes the reason for conducting the research, the problems in teaching vocabulary and the suitable teaching media which are needed to improve students' vocabulary achievement. This chapter also describes the identification of research problems, limitation of the problems, formulation of the problems, objectives of the research, uses of the research, scope of the research and definition of terms.

1.1 Background of the Problems

Vocabulary is not only important but it is also a complex element of a language. It plays an important role in helping the language learners master the language they are learning. Vocabulary is the basic competence that must be reached by students in order to fulfill the qualification of basic competencies like reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In other words, it is difficult to master competences without mastering and understanding vocabulary. It will also affect the language learning process of the learners. For that reason, with adequate vocabulary mastery, the learners will be able to understand and also use spoken and written language easily.

Rivers (1970:462) emphasizes that it would be impossible to learn a language without vocabulary. This also means that learning a language practically always means learning the words of the language. Additionally, Thornbury (2007:13) says that without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. Then, Chin (2004:1) also supports that vocabulary is directly related to success in school. These statements indicate that in order to master a language including English, the learner shall acquire a great amount of vocabulary. Therefore, it is reasonable and understandable that possessing a lot of vocabularies is necessary for students to understand or to master English.

Unfortunately, based on the researcher observation during her PPL in SMP N 3 Tanjung Raya Mesuji, the students' problems in learning English were not only memorizing vocabulary, but also it was hard for them to understand the vocabulary especially when the vocabulary was put in different context. Many students were poor in vocabulary mastery, they had problem to understand the reading text, the sentences, and the meaning of the words. It was also difficult for them either to use English in communication, understanding spoken language or to express their idea in written text. This might be caused by their low motivation and their lack of vocabulary. When the teacher asked questions, they answered wrongly even no one answered the question. Besides that, they seldom did the task. According to them, they were lazy to do their homework because they did not understand the material. This is the main reason many students consider that learning vocabulary is a tiresome job.

Furthermore, it becomes a great problem for students of Junior High school to master approximately 600 to 1500 words according to guidelines of School-based curriculum (KTSP) for English. In fact, the students' vocabulary mastery does not reach this expectation. The researcher found that most students at the third year were quite poor at vocabulary mastery. It could be seen from their vocabulary test scores which were mostly lower than the minimal mastery criterion (KKM) which required the students to score 73. It is supported by the study of Pratama (2010:40) who had found that the majority of students in his classes failed in vocabulary test. They still lacked vocabularies and faced many difficulties in English vocabulary acquisition whereas the students in the third grade should have good vocabulary mastery that was necessary to pass their final examination.

In addition, according to the researcher observation in SMP Muhammadiyah Trimurjo, another possible reason came from the technique and media, which were used by the teacher. The researcher noticed that the teacher only focused on how the materials could be finished. In other words, the learning process was still dominated by the teacher (teacher-centered). According to teacher, it was important to finish all materials based on the book. Thus, students felt bored in class and became passive in learning activity. Because of that, the teacher should look for an effective media to make learning vocabulary easier, more pleasant, and enjoyable.

Media are the instruments of a teacher and it is teacher's responsibility to determine the appropriate media, which is more useful for teaching vocabulary. Teacher shall have a large number of media to reach the success in teaching and

learning process. Thus, teacher needs a teaching media such as real object, chart, picture, etc. and must be able to select the ones, which will be the most efficient in leading the learners to the desired target. Moreover, the researcher realized that an interesting media could encourage students to learn vocabulary more easily.

However, it is not easy to choose which media that is effective to be applied in the class. Based on the assumption, the researcher tries to solve the problem by having a comparative study between two media. In choosing the appropriate media, the researcher takes note of Thornbury's opinion (2007:25) that visualizing is the best way to teach new word for all subjects. Hence, the researcher attempts to use visual dictionary and sequential art for teaching vocabulary, to find out whether one or both of them would be effective or not for teaching and increasing students' vocabulary achievement.

These two media are might be applicable to be used in Junior High School and they will make the teaching learning process more enjoyable and interesting. According to Haynes and Zacarian (2010: 57) the visual and small group arrangement help the English language learners learn their vocabulary more effectively. Visualization can also be used to transfer the image of real thing. Therefore, teacher can use visual dictionary to make the learners easy to memorize what they have learnt and raising students' interest and motivation to build their vocabulary achievement as well. Meanwhile, it is stated by Eisner (1990) that sequential art is the art form of using a train of images deployed in sequence to convey information. It means that sequential art, which is usually

shown in interesting drawing even dialogue, can attract students' interest to learn vocabulary and also can help the students to improve and practice their words.

Based on rationale reason above, the researcher proposes visual dictionary and sequential art to be used in teaching learning process. In order to find out which media will be more effective, the researcher compares visual dictionary and sequential art. The research is conducted at SMP Muhammadiyah Trimurjo as comparative media research. The result finally could be a consideration for teachers nowadays to make the teaching of vocabulary more interesting and increase the vocabulary achievement. Hopefully, by presenting visual dictionary and sequential art as the media, students' vocabulary achievement could increase.

1.2 Identification of Research Problems

Based on the background above, the research problems can be identified as follows:

1. The students' vocabulary achievements are still low. It means that the students are still difficult to memorize vocabularies, understand the reading text, and use the vocabularies in spoken and written English.
2. The students' motivations in learning English were still low. So, it is difficult to improve their English ability well.
3. The learning process was still dominated by the teacher (teacher-centered)
4. The teacher rarely applied interesting media to teach.

1.3 Limitation of the Problems

Based on the identification of the problems, the researcher focused the research in students' vocabulary achievement of content words as a result of implementing Visual Dictionary and Sequential Art. The decision was taken by considering the importance of Visual Dictionary and Sequential Art that was useful to increase students' vocabulary achievement and knowing the fact that most students at grade nine of SMP Muhammadiyah Trimurjo got low scores in vocabulary test. Visual Dictionary and Sequential Art are considered as media which are applicable and useful in increasing vocabulary achievement.

1.4 Formulation of Problems

Based on the background of problem mentioned previously, the researcher formulates the problems as follow:

1. Which one between visual dictionary and sequential art will be more effective to increase students' vocabulary achievement?
2. What problems do the students face/undergo in learning vocabulary through visual dictionary and sequential art?

1.5 Objectives of the Research

This research is aimed to:

1. To find out whether visual dictionary is more effective to increase students' vocabulary achievement than sequential art.

2. To find out the problems the students face/undergo in learning vocabulary through visual dictionary and sequential art.

1.6 Uses of the Research

The following uses of the research are:

1. Theoretically, the result of this research is supposed to give contribution to the theory of teaching. Furthermore, the conclusion of this research can be used as a reflection to improve the result of the teaching.

2. Practically:

- a. For the English teachers:

This research can inform that one of the two media above is more effective applied as an alternative media to increase students' vocabulary achievement.

- b. For the students:

This research can be used to motivate students, make them interested and be active in learning reading.

- c. For the researcher:

This research can give information for further research with certain interest.

1.7 Scope of the Research

This research is a quantitative research, which is conducted by giving the pre-test and post-test to analyze how significant the improvement of the students'

vocabulary achievement after the implementation of visual dictionary and sequential art as the media of learning English. Observation and interview are also applied to find out the problems the students faced in learning vocabulary.

This research administered at grade IX of SMP Muhammadiyah Trimurjo, Central Lampung. The material given was based on KTSP curriculum of Junior High School. In this research, the researcher focused on the implementation of using visual dictionary and sequential art as the media of teaching vocabulary. The materials taught were related to the reading skill that was procedure text with kitchen area as the theme. There were two treatments in this research. This focused on vocabulary of content words (noun, verb, adjective and adverb) specifically it was about 40 words that were appear in the materials of procedure text. The tests to evaluate the students' achievement were also based on the same material, which was conducted in written form.

1.8 Definition of Terms

There are some definitions which are important to know, as follow:

1. *Vocabulary* a list of words usually arranged alphabetically and defined, explained, or translated into the range of language, the stock of word a person's command the word used in particular, the branch of object language (Webster, 1988).
2. *Visual Dictionary* is a dictionary that primarily uses pictures to illustrate the meaning of words and organized by themes (Wigan, 2009).

3. *Sequential Art* is the art form of using a train of images deployed in sequence to graphic storytelling or conveys information (Eisner, 1990).