

I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses about background of the problem, identification of the problem, formulation of the problem, objective of the research, uses of the research, scope of the research, and definition of terms.

A. Background of the Problem

English is the first foreign language taught in Indonesia. It is not only taught in elementary school, junior high school and senior high school, but also in university level. The objective of the foreign language instruction is to help the students communicate in English. Learning a language can not be separated from learning vocabulary. If students lack vocabulary, how can they communicate in the target language? Vocabulary is a basic component for communicating. Students lack of vocabulary will discourage them to use the target language, either in spoken or written communication.

Vocabulary is one of language aspects that is taught in the classroom during the process of language teaching. Vocabulary is the vital aspect of the language, since it is an element that should be acquired to express or share ideas to other people.

Vocabulary is very important for student to master the language. When students practice the four skills of language: listening, speaking, reading and writing, they

use certain amount of vocabularies. By having a lot of vocabulary, the students can express more ideas. The quantity of one's language depends on the quality of his or her knowledge of vocabulary. The richer one's vocabulary is, the more fluent he or she is in using the language. It would be impossible to learn a language without vocabulary. Besides that, vocabulary earned the highest score (4 of 10 point) in speaking and writing test, 40 percent in listening test score, and 30 percent in reading test score of Junior High School National Final Examination (Depdiknas,2006:11-14). But, the writer realizes that the students' vocabulary ability in that four skills are not satisfactory. Thus, vocabulary teaching should be taken into account in order to gain better result of the students' English score.

Based on curriculum /Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (Depdiknas 2006), the students of Junior High School should master the vocabulary around 1000-1500 words in order to be able to use English both in spoken and written language. When the writer started teaching in SMP Karya Bhakti Gadingrejo she found that students of this school especially in the second grade of SMP Karya Bhakti Gadingrejo had very limited vocabulary. Most of them did not understand the text or even could not do exercise because they did not know the meaning of words. It also happened in speaking, the students were reluctant to speak because of their limited vocabulary. Eventually, they found English as an uninteresting subject. So, it will be very difficult to reach the target of Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal (KKM) of the school for English subject. The target of the learning product was 60 but the average score of mid test in the previous semester was just 47.26. Obviously, it can be seen that the English score is very low, since the scores of all the English skills are still far from the target. From her experience as

a teacher, it was revealed that most of the students could not answer the teachers' questions, they kept asking her teacher to translate the questions into Bahasa Indonesia as they could not answer them in English.

Beside that, from the observation that has been done in advance, it was found that the teacher taught the students in an ordinary way, such as just writing the material from the textbook and doing exercise in the students' work book without knowing the function and the meaning. And it was boring for them because it did not give challenge for the students to make their English better. Meanwhile from her interview with the students, she found that the students have lack of vocabulary and difficulty to learn the vocabulary well, the students felt hard to memorize the vocabularies. They hardly ever practiced and used the vocabulary in daily activity while the teacher seemed to emphasize only on memorizing the list of vocabulary without training the students well to develop their vocabulary and involving the student in the activity. Therefore, it is necessary for the teacher to focus more on strategy of learning vocabulary that improve the students' vocabulary achievement, and make the learning interesting for the students.

Vocabulary instruction occurred in a variety of ways in the classroom. Teachers must be prepared to work with students with varied ability levels. In one classroom there would be students with diverse word knowledge backgrounds, learning styles and literacy abilities (Blachowicz et.al, 2005). Blachowicz et.al (2005:27) also state that it is up to the teacher to make word learning pervasive, enjoyable, meaningful and effective.

In order to master the vocabulary that will help the students when they practice the language, the students would need a good technique which will help them to learn or memorize the vocabulary easily. The teacher should provide the students with the technique that can motivate the students to involve in the activity of learning. As Moore (2000:25) says that students may want to complete particular assignment principally because it interests or excites them, rather than enables them to achieve a high grade or to please their teacher or parents. The statement suggested that it is better to motivate the students by giving an interesting and exciting activity. The teacher is highly suggested to employ an appropriate approach and maintain the teaching learning process that builds the students' awareness on using the knowledge rather than knowing it.

A good teacher should work by implementing a true combination of the methods of instruction for vocabulary since there is no one recommended method of instruction. As Allen and Vallete (1997) state that teaching vocabulary can be meaningful if the teacher conduct the teaching process by combining the available techniques of teaching.

There are many techniques that can be used to learn or master the vocabulary, one of them is mnemonic technique. Mnemonic technique is a good technique to make new material more memorable. Mnemonic is designed to improve memory of key information. Mnemonic keyword is possibly the most helpful method for teaching vocabulary according to the findings of the National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000). With mnemonics, associations might be made to link a letter or picture with a word. Some teachers use this strategy because it provides access to the

general education curriculum by acting as a tool to encode information so that it can be retrieved from the memory later. Students are expected to learn this strategy for retaining information in and out of school.

Mnemonic technique can be used across instructional content areas: language, arts including vocabulary, spelling and letter recognition, mathematics, science, social studies, foreign language, and other subject areas. The use of mnemonic strategy does not require a wealth of materials nor extensive planning, preparation and time (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1998).

Based on the background stated previously, the researcher has focused her classroom action research on teaching vocabulary by using Mnemonic Story technique in teaching vocabulary. It is hoped that the teaching learning process through Mnemonic story technique could increase students' vocabulary achievement in teaching learning process and improve the quality of teacher's teaching performance.

B. Identification of the Problems

In class VIII A of SMP Karya Bhakti Gadingrejo some problems occur concerning the students' and the teacher's problems. Those problems are:

1. The students' average result of their English subject was very low.
2. Only a few students were interested in studying English.
3. During the teaching learning process, the students were not serious to study English.
4. The students lacked of vocabulary.

5. The students were afraid and shy if they are asked to read or speak English.
6. Their pronunciations were not good because they never practice in front of the class.
7. The teacher taught them monotonously so the students felt bored..
8. The students got difficulties to understand the text.

C. Limitation of the Problems

Based on the identification of the problems above the researcher limits her research on Mnemonic Story Technique, to overcome problem no 4, to increase the students' vocabulary, to improve the students' participation in learning and to improve the teacher's teaching performance.

D. Formulation of the Problems

In line with the background of the study described in the previous pages, the researcher formulates the problems as follow:

1. Can the use of mnemonic story technique increase the students' vocabulary achievement?
2. Can the use of mnemonic story technique improve students' participation in learning?
3. Can the use of mnemonic story technique improve the teacher's teaching performance?

E. Objectives of the Research

In relation to the formulation of the problems, the objectives of this classroom action research are:

1. To find out whether the use of mnemonic story technique can increase students' vocabulary achievement in the second grade of SMP Karya Bhakti Gadingrejo
2. To find out whether the use of mnemonic story technique can improve students' participation in learning.
3. To find out whether the use of mnemonic story technique can improve the teacher's teaching performance.

F. Uses of the Research

This research is useful both practically and theoretically.

1. Practically

The writer expects that the result of the research may useful for:

- a. The students: the treatment given in the classroom action research can increase the students' interest and achievement in vocabulary.
- b. The teacher : the teacher can make variations of teaching vocabulary by using mnemonic technique.
- c. The school: hopefully, the result of the research can be used as a consideration related to the development of English teaching.

2.Theoretically

The result of this Classroom Action Research supports the theory about the implementation of mnemonic technique in increasing students vocabulary achievement.

G. Scope of the Research

The classroom action research was conducted at the second year of SMP Karya Bhakti Gadingrejo, in the first semester of 2011-2012. There were 30 students in class VIIIA. The focus of this study is on teaching vocabulary by using mnemonic story technique to increase students' vocabulary achievement, to improve the students' participation in learning and the quality of the teacher's teaching performance in teaching learning process. The vocabulary consisted of noun, verb and adjective that they need to master for that. The materials are adopted from 2006 English curriculum of Junior High School, in forms narrative stories entitled :A Country Mouse and Town Mouse. This classroom action research was conducted in two cycles. Each cycle consisted of four steps: such as, planning, action, observation and interpretation, analysis and reflection. In action step, the researcher administered three meetings or treatments in teaching learning process in each cycle.

H. Definition of Terms

1. Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the basic element of language in form of words in which it makes a language meaningful.

2. Mnemonic

Mnemonic is a memory enhancing instructional strategy that involves teaching students to link a new information that is taught to information they already know.

3. Student Learning Activity

Student Learning Activity means any activity done by the students during the teaching learning process. By doing many activities they will gain the knowledge, comprehension and aspect of behavior to develop their skill that may be meaningful for their social life.

4. Teacher's Performance

Teacher's performance is the way in which the teacher behaves in the process of teaching or any behavior done by the teacher when she/he teaches the students.