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## Engaging Secondary School Students In Word Mapping Strategy In Learning General Vocabulary of Descriptive Text: A Classroom Action Research

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to find whether Word Mapping Strategy can engage Secondary school students in learning general vocabulary of descriptive text. In order to achieve the research objectives, a classroom action research was used as a research design in this study. The participants of this study were 23 students of class VIII in one of Islamic secondary schools. The results of the study showed that word mapping strategy is effective to engage students in learning vocabulary. Most of students respond positively to the use of this strategy. The students feel satisfied with this strategy. They said that this strategy give them many benefits such as increasing students' vocabulary, give the clearer meaning and make students feel motivated in the learning process. However, even though word mapping has many positive impacts, this strategy also makes students feel challenged, especially when students are asked to make word map charts in their notebooks. Therefore, this research finding can be studied more deeply for the future research to resolve the emerged problem. From the results of the research, it can be concluded that this strategy is highly recommended to be applied for the teacher in teaching vocabulary.

## 1. Introduction

Defined as a group of words that form sentences, vocabulary has an important role in supporting the development of several English language skills possessed by students. Students especially in secondary schools are required to be able to master this skill to support their English language skills such as skills in listening, reading, writing and speaking. Fikriah (2021) stated that students who have a good vocabulary mastery will be easy to communicate with other people and students who have low vocabulary mastery will have difficulty to communicate with other people because these students cannot understand and express their ideas to other people. As a result, the existing communication becomes ineffective. Besides that, vocabulary is also considered as the main key for students to understand what they

hear and what they read in the school so this ability is very important to master by many students. But in fact, there are still many students who have low ability in their vocabulary mastery.

From several previous studies, several reasons were found that made it difficult for students to master vocabulary skills, one of them is because there is ineffectiveness of the learning methods applied by the teachers. Delatu (2020) in Albakia et al. (2023) stated that most of the teachers only use conventional methods in teaching vocabulary. They only give the students assignments to look for several foreign words and then ask students to translate it using the dictionaries that students bring to the school. Teachers do not provide interesting learning methods so that students are not motivated to be actively involved in learning process. Therefore, the researcher is interested in conducting the research using this word mapping strategy for students to apply in their vocabulary learning. In this case, the researcher applied a word mapping strategy in learning general vocabulary using descriptive text.

### ***Teaching & Learning Vocabulary***

Vocabulary is one of the important aspects that must be learned in English learning. Apart from the four main abilities in English such as Listening, Reading, Writing & Speaking, vocabulary became the central ability that determines the successful of someone's communication process. Vocabulary also plays an important role for many language learners, both second language and foreign language learners because this ability is always demonstrated both inside and outside of the school. In Indonesia, this ability has been taught since someone has entered kindergarten level (Yuda & Prasetyarini, 2022).

Apart from that, Schrivener (1994: 74) in Sirait et al. (2018) differentiates vocabulary according to the acquisition process into two kinds, namely receptive vocabulary and productive vocabulary. Receptive vocabulary is a type of vocabulary that is acquired when someone listens to or reads something where the vocabulary does not have to be communicated. Through receptive vocabulary, someone only needs to understand the meaning of the words. Faraj (2015) explains in more detail that receptive vocabulary is a type of passive vocabulary that cannot be applied in a written or spoken form. While productive vocabulary is the type of vocabulary that is spoken, written and spelled. Acquiring productive vocabulary depends on the person we are talking to. The acquisition of vocabulary when we are talking with the hotel staff will certainly be different from the acquisition of vocabulary when we are talking with people who are not the part of hotel staff.

Apart from that, Widodo (2016: 122) and Nation (2001, PP.12-13) in Rainsyah (2023) also divide types of words into several groups:

1. High-frequency words: High-frequency words can be found in various linguistic situations and there are 2000 high-frequency words widely used in English language.
2. Academic words: Words that are widely used in academic writing.

3. Technical words: Words that are relevant to the concept and content of the text. Examples include the words computer and mathematics.

4. Low-frequency words: The words are not academic words and they are rarely used by many people.

From the explanations above, the general vocabulary used in this research is included in the first type of words, namely high-frequency words.

### **Descriptive Text**

Descriptive text is a type of text that used to describe a person, place, or thing in detail. In describing these three things, descriptive text has linguistic characteristics that need to be considered by the writer such as the use of adjectives, simple present, and action verbs. Besides that, descriptive text also has a generic structure that consisted of identification and description. In identification, the student will identify the phenomenon or object that is going to be described and in description, the student will describe the specific parts of the object that is being described (Jayanti, 2019). Susanti & Amri (2013) also define descriptive text as a kind of text that describe about what a person or a thing is like. The description can be from the physical appearance, the smell, the sound/voice or the texture of something or someone. Meanwhile, the things that can be described is like object, animal or specific human. When making descriptive text, the writer must be able to create the readers or listeners feel and get a clear view of the object that is being described (Purnamasari et al., 2021).

From the several literatures above, this research was conducted to answer the following research question: *“How does the students response in learning general vocabulary of descriptive text using word mapping strategy?”*. This research was conducted with the aim to find out the students response towards the application of word mapping strategy in learning general vocabulary of descriptive text, whether this strategy can engage their vocabulary mastery or not.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1. Research site & participants**

This research was conducted at one of Islamic secondary school located in Cirebon area in the even semester of the 2023/2024 academic year. The investigation was conducted for a July 2024 and 23 students from eight-grade was participated in this research. Meanwhile, to make it easier in processing the data, the researcher only took 5 students to be interviewed.

### **2.2 Research design**

This research used qualitative methods with classroom action research as the research design. Anne Burns (2009) stated that the meaning of classroom action can be seen from the division of the words action and research. The word *"action"* relates to the identification and exploration of an issue, question, dilemma, gap, or

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puzzle in a work context, which can be in the classroom, school or institution. Meanwhile, the word "*research*" relates to a systematic approach in collecting information or data and usually uses a qualitative approach. From this definition, it can be concluded that classroom action research is a form of self-reflection that identifies/explores a problem that exists in a learning and acts through learning planning to overcome a learning problem based on the evidence data (Burns, 2010). Burns (1999) in Dikilitas & Griffiths (2017:3) also divides classroom action research into four phases, including planning, action, observation and reflection.

### ***Instructional Procedure:***

All the students follow the learning activity in four steps, such as: Building the context or field, modelling the text, joint construction and independent construction. The steps were adapted from Yanto et al. (2023):

- a. Building the context or field: at this stage, the teacher start the learning by preparing the learning materials related to descriptive text but focuses more on learning the vocabulary. The teacher used descriptive text to explain the knowledge of basics vocabulary. Starting from the definition of vocabulary, the types of vocabulary that exist in descriptive text (vocabulary for descriptive text types that describe a person) and knowledge of lexico grammatical features that exist in descriptive text such as the use of adjectives, simple present and action verbs using the lecture method.
- b. Modelling the text: at this stage, the teacher instructs students to watch two videos that show examples of descriptive text taken from the YouTube platform and after watching the video, the teacher demonstrates students how to make a word mapping chart from the vocabulary in the video. In this case, the teacher used the steps from Schwartz & Raphael (1985) in making word mapping chart.
- c. Joint construction: at this stage, the teacher divides students in groups and then asked them to find the meaning of vocabulary that they do not understand from new videos using word mapping chart.
- d. Independent construction: at this stage, the teacher asked students to present their word mapping task in front of the class.

### ***2.3 Data Collection and analysis***

This research used semi-structured interview as a data collection techniques. The researcher conducted interview with five students as an interviewee and the interview was deliver in Bahasa Indonesia to prevent the misunderstanding. The researcher has prepared eight open-ended question adapted from Goodnough & Woods (2002) that will be asked to the students:

- a. What do you think about learning general vocabulary of descriptive text using word mapping strategy?
  - b. In your opinion, what makes you interested in learning general vocabulary of descriptive text using word mapping strategy?
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- c. Do you think that learning general vocabulary of descriptive text using word mapping strategy can engage your vocabulary mastery?
  - d. How do you compare English language learning, especially vocabulary learning using word mapping and not using word mapping strategy?
  - e. In your opinion, does learning vocabulary using word mapping strategy can help you in defining the meaning of various vocabulary?
  - f. What do you do while learning English using word mapping strategy? Please explain!
  - g. In your opinion, what are the advantages of using word mapping strategy?
  - h. In your opinion, does word mapping strategy can help you to learn independently in understanding English vocabulary? Please explain!

After collecting the data, the researcher analyzed the data using thematic-analysis. Guest et al. (2011) stated that thematic analysis moves beyond counting explicit words or phrases and focuses on identifying and describing implicit and explicit ideas in data, namely themes, code and then typically developed to represent identified themes and applied to or linked to the raw data as summary markers for subsequent analysis. According to Braun & Clark (2006), thematic analysis contained six-phases as follow:

1. Familiarization with the data
2. Generating initial codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing the report

### **3. Results and Discussion**

#### **3.1 Results**

Based on the data from interview, one theme has been identified to answer the following research question: *“How does the students’ response in learning general vocabulary of descriptive text using word mapping strategy?”* and the theme is *“The Efficacy and The Challenge of Word Mapping Strategy”*.

##### **1) The Efficacy of Word Mapping Strategy**

Students responded positively to the use of word mapping strategy in learning general vocabulary of descriptive text. Students revealed that the word mapping strategy gave them many advantages such as increasing vocabulary mastery, providing clarity in the meaning of the word and increasing their motivation to learn independently as stated in the following vignettes of students’ interview.

##### ***Student Vignette 1***

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*The learning become more interesting when we use word mapping strategy because word mapping strategy is easy to understand and make our skills improved. Unlike when we use a dictionary, we just tend to rely on dictionary.*

### ***Student Vignette 2***

*Word mapping strategy can be used to define the meaning of the word because the meaning that we get become more clear and detailed.*

### ***Student Vignette 3***

*Word mapping is interesting because it has a graphical form. Besides that, we can also learn vocabulary from video that we like such as Jungkook's videos. So, I feel motivated to learn vocabulary individually.*

### ***Student Vignette 4***

*Compared to other methods, it is easier to use the word mapping strategy because this strategy will automatically give you a lots of vocabulary.*

### ***Student Vignette 5***

*If we use word mapping, we can use the box shape, whereas if we use a dictionary, we can just look the meaning.*

From the students' vignettes above, it can be seen that student's think that word mapping strategy can be used to help them in vocabulary learning. They can use this strategy to find the meaning of the word so that the meaning obtained becomes clearer and unlimited. In addition, the use of word mapping strategy also encourages students' interest in learning independently by not relying on the use of dictionaries. After getting the benefits of using the word mapping strategy, students argue that using a dictionary in learning vocabulary is not enough. In this case, students still have to think critically and creatively in finding the meaning of the word. From the student vignettes, it can also be seen that the use of word mapping strategy can improve students' vocabulary skills. Through this strategy, students' vocabulary acquisition has improved significantly. Meanwhile, the collaboration of word mapping strategy with video text also affects students' interest in learning. Students become motivated in learning by using this media.

## **2) The challenges of word mapping strategy**

Apart from positive responses, students also feel challenged when using the word mapping strategy to find the meaning of a word and the following are students' vignettes as empirical evidence regarding the challenges that students face when using the word mapping strategy in learning general vocabulary of descriptive text.

### ***Student Vignette 1***

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*The teacher showed me the way to use word mapping strategy. First, look at the word that we got from the video, then determine the vocabulary types of the word, whether it is adjective, simple present or action verb. After that, identify the word using the word mapping strategy and then form the word using boxes which is quite difficult but still understandable.*

### **Student Vignette 2**

*In my opinion, word mapping can be used to improve our vocabulary as long as it is studied and practiced regularly.*

From the students' vignettes above, it can be concluded that students feel challenged when using word mapping strategy in learning general vocabulary of descriptive text. Students find it difficult when making word map charts that have several boxes. They have to adjust the width and length of their book to create a good word map chart. Apart from that, word maps are still considered foreign to the students. Even though word maps are easy to understand, students argue that they still need to practice it regularly.

### **3.2. Discussion**

Based on the findings of the research, it can be said that the word mapping strategy can be applied by the teacher in learning vocabulary because the students respond positively to the use of the strategy. The students stated if the strategy can engage their vocabulary mastery. This is in line with the research of Rainsyah (2023) that said if word mapping strategy makes students motivated to expand their vocabulary mastery. Therefore, the students' vocabulary mastery can engage significantly. Furthermore, the majority of students also think that the word mapping strategy can be used to support their learning because this strategy makes the learning atmosphere become more interesting and less monotonous. This is in line with the research of Karendra et al. (2017) & Budi et al. (2021) that said if word mapping strategy is considered as a strategy that can be used to motivate students in learning process.

In addition, word mapping strategy is also gives students the clear meaning of the word. In finding and defining the meaning of the word, the use of word mapping strategy is more beneficial than the use of dictionary. The word mapping strategy makes the meaning of the word become a wide. The students also feel satisfied with this strategy because this strategy allows them to get deeper meaning of the word. This is consistent with the research of Rahma (2016) that stated if the word mapping strategy makes the meaning of the word become clearer and detail so the students' understanding in vocabulary can improve positively.

Besides that, the collaboration between word mapping strategy and digital text in the form of videos also has a positive impact on student motivation in learning. Students said that learning using this media make them interested to active and participate in learning process because the use of digital text in the form of video provides a visually interesting media and dynamic learning experience to the student (Rainsyah, 2023). Furthermore, the word mapping strategy can also

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increase students' creativity in learning vocabulary because the student feel challenged to be able to find the meaning of the word through the process of wide and deeper thinking about the relationship of several words (Penton et al., 2004).

However, even though word mapping provides many benefits, some students still feel challenged when using this strategy. Students find it difficult to create a word map chart that contains many boxes. Students need to adjust the size of the paper used to the width of the boxes in the word map chart. Apart from that, students also still feel unfamiliar with the use of this strategy. This is in line with research from Rainsyah (2023) which stated that word map is an unfamiliar strategy for the students who has never applied it before. Therefore, students still need to practice it repeatedly.

#### 4. Conclusion

The research results show that the use of the word mapping strategy in learning vocabulary of descriptive can engage students' in their learning process. This strategy makes students motivated to take part in learning because they are given the opportunity to be creative in finding the meaning of a word through forming a word mapping chart. Apart from that, through this strategy, they also get clear and broad meanings of words so that their vocabulary mastery increased in a positive way. However, even though word mapping has many positive impacts, this strategy also makes students feel challenged, especially when students are asked to make word map charts in their notebooks. Therefore, this research finding can be studied more deeply for the future research to resolve the emerged problem.

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