

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discussed relevant literature reviews as the basis for this study. The material discussed included theories related to vocabulary acquisition, vocabulary teaching, and the application of the Semantic Mapping technique as a teaching strategy, as well as previous relevant studies on the use of Semantic Mapping to improve students' vocabulary mastery. These theories and previous studies were used as references in this study and in analyzing the effect of the Semantic Mapping technique on the vocabulary mastery of eighth-grade students at SMP Joseph Khatulistiwa. This chapter was structured to include a comprehensive discussion of theoretical foundations, relevant previous studies, and the conceptual framework, thereby providing a complete foundation for this study.

A. The Nature of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is a fundamental component that students need to develop when learning a language, as it plays an important role in understanding and conveying meaning. Adequate vocabulary knowledge enables students to understand information, express ideas effectively, and participate actively in communication. In the context of English language learning, vocabulary serves as a foundation that supports students in mastering other language skills and using language meaningfully in both academic and everyday situations. The term vocabulary refers to the

collection of words used in a language, which serves as the basic units of meaning and is essential for constructing sentences and communicating messages clearly.

Vocabulary mastery is essential in learning English because it forms the basis of communication and understanding. Vocabulary mastery is not just about memorizing words, but also understanding their meaning, form, and use in context. Vocabulary mastery is not limited to memorizing word meanings, but involves the ability to use and produce vocabulary effectively in comprehension processes. Students with stronger productive vocabulary knowledge tend to demonstrate more accurate and efficient sentence comprehension, whereas those with limited vocabulary knowledge experience greater difficulty in processing written and spoken language (Sumoto et al., 2023, pp. 6–7). By developing strong vocabulary mastery, students can improve their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, enabling them to participate more confidently in classroom interactions. Limited vocabulary knowledge can hinder students' progress in all language skills, while students with a broader vocabulary tend to achieve higher academic performance and overall language proficiency (Ayana et al., 2024, p. 2).

In addition, this active involvement occurs because sufficient vocabulary enables students to understand instructions, express ideas with more confidence, and respond appropriately during classroom interactions. As a result, students with stronger vocabulary mastery are more willing to participate verbally and engage in group-based learning, which further

supports their language development. Effective vocabulary learning also occurs when students repeatedly interact with words in meaningful contexts, thereby supporting deeper understanding, long-term memory, and appropriate vocabulary use (Wen & Naim, 2023, pp. 225–226). Therefore, vocabulary mastery is essential for academic success and effective communication.

Strong vocabulary knowledge enables students to express ideas clearly, understand new texts efficiently, and actively participate in various language tasks. Vocabulary mastery is not merely about knowing many words, but also understanding their meaning, form, use in context, and strategic application, which is important in both academic and real-life contexts.

1. Definition of Vocabulary Mastery

Vocabulary mastery is the ability to understand, remember, and use vocabulary in English appropriately according to context. This ability includes not only memorizing individual vocabulary items, but also understanding their meaning, form, spelling, and usage in communication. Vocabulary mastery includes knowledge of word meanings, word forms, and how they are used, which shows that vocabulary mastery involves deep understanding, not just memorizing words (Nation, 2013, pp. 44–45).

Vocabulary mastery involves not only the ability to recognize words in general, but also various important components that support effective language comprehension and use. Vocabulary mastery consists of several key aspects, including quantity (the number of words mastered), meaning (understanding the meaning of words in context), spelling (the ability to

write words correctly), and pronunciation (the ability to pronounce words according to phonetic rules). These aspects are important components of vocabulary mastery (González-Fernández & Schmitt, 2020, pp. 483–484).

This study emphasizes that each component plays an important role in supporting other language skills, such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening. For example, without adequate vocabulary, students have difficulty understanding texts or expressing their ideas. Similarly, errors in spelling or pronunciation can hinder effective communication and reduce students' confidence in using English.

In addition, beyond the basic aspects of vocabulary knowledge, a more comprehensive understanding of vocabulary mastery emphasizes the importance of how words are related to each other and used appropriately in context. Vocabulary mastery also includes the ability to recognize collocations, word groups, and word varieties that are appropriate for the context of communication (Thornbury, 2002, pp. 13–14). Vocabulary mastery is not just about memorizing words, but also understanding how they are used naturally in conversation or written text.

In other words, students need to develop a comprehensive understanding that includes meaning, form, usage, and the relationship of words to other words, so that the vocabulary they have mastered can be used effectively in everyday communication and academic activities.

In addition, vocabulary mastery also requires a structured learning framework that supports effective linguistic input processing, so that

students can understand, remember, and use vocabulary meaningfully. Vocabulary mastery is an important element in foreign language learning because it forms the basis for the development of other language skills, and the effectiveness of this acquisition is greatly influenced by the learning strategies used (Olimjonovna & Sanakulov, 2025, p. 13). Therefore, choosing the right learning strategy is an important factor in ensuring that vocabulary learning supports students' overall language skills, which is directly relevant to this study's focus on vocabulary acquisition.

Vocabulary mastery is not limited to knowing the meaning of words, but also involves understanding various interrelated aspects of vocabulary knowledge, including form, meaning, and usage (Alshumrani, 2022, p. 327). Therefore, vocabulary teaching in this study was designed to address these interrelated aspects so that students could develop more comprehensive and functional vocabulary mastery. This study emphasized the use of structured vocabulary learning techniques that helped students organize and connect lexical items meaningfully to improve vocabulary mastery.

Based on the theories reviewed and previous studies, vocabulary mastery is not only the ability to recognize the meaning of words, but also involves understanding various aspects of vocabulary knowledge that enable accurate and appropriate language use. In addition, vocabulary mastery is greatly influenced by the learning strategies applied during the

learning process. Therefore, the use of appropriate strategies, such as Semantic Mapping, is expected to support students in organizing vocabulary knowledge, strengthening memory, and improving their overall vocabulary mastery.

2. Purpose of Vocabulary

Vocabulary mastery is very important in language learning because it forms the basis for all language skills and supports learners in understanding and producing meaningful communication. In the context of English language learning, vocabulary knowledge is not only about memorizing word forms, but also involves understanding word meanings, word usage, and how words relate to each other in various contexts. Therefore, the goal of vocabulary learning is to help students develop breadth (the number of words known) and depth (the ability to use words accurately and appropriately), so that they can communicate effectively in real-life situations. This is highly relevant to this study because Semantic Mapping aims to strengthen students' vocabulary mastery through the organization and association of meaningful words.

In addition, vocabulary mastery is not merely about recognizing the meaning of words, but involves a deeper understanding of various aspects of word knowledge. In the context of learning English as a foreign language, students need to understand how words function in communication. Knowing a word includes several components such as its meaning, written form, spoken form, grammatical behaviour, and use

(Schmitt, 2000, pp. 4–5). This statement indicates that vocabulary mastery encompasses multiple dimensions, including meaning, spelling, and pronunciation, which are essential for supporting students' communicative competence.

Therefore, vocabulary should be viewed as a fundamental component in second language acquisition, particularly in helping students develop effective communication skills. Therefore, the goal of vocabulary learning is to build students' lexical knowledge so that they can understand texts, express ideas clearly, and interact effectively in various communication contexts. In this study, Semantic Mapping can be an effective strategy because it helps students organize vocabulary meaningfully, which supports deeper understanding and better retention.

Furthermore, to reinforce the learning objectives of vocabulary in the context of vocabulary mastery through Semantic Mapping, it can be understood that vocabulary has several important objectives in language learning. Vocabulary is important for students. There are several vocabulary objectives, namely: to express opinions and thoughts, especially in the early stages when students are motivated; to learn the basic words needed to communicate in the language; to understand nuances of meaning; and to become more proficient in word choice and expressions (Rahman, 2024, pp. 91–93). These objectives are relevant to the use of Semantic Mapping because this technique helps students organize vocabulary meaningfully, which supports their ability to express

ideas clearly, build basic vocabulary for communication, and understand the nuances of word meanings. To visualize the relationships between words and enhance understanding, Semantic Mapping is used as an activity, allowing students to see how words are connected thematically and conceptually. Therefore, Semantic Mapping can help students achieve these goals by providing a visual and structured way to connect words based on their meaning, which improves vocabulary retention and use in real-life contexts.

Overall, the goal of vocabulary mastery is not only related to the number of words mastered, but also to students' ability to use vocabulary appropriately, meaningfully, and contextually in communication. Vocabulary serves to help students express their opinions, interact in social life, build initial motivation in language learning, develop basic understanding for daily needs, understand nuances of meaning, and improve their ability to choose and express the right words.

Therefore, effective learning has to lead to students' ability to organize and learn words meaningfully, so that they are able to remember and use what they learn more appropriately in various situations. Thus, optimal language mastery is achieved through a learning approach that emphasizes understanding meaning, relationships between words, and the use of language in real contexts.

3. Types of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is related to the four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students usually absorb vocabulary through listening and speaking before learning vocabulary for reading and writing. Vocabulary frequency is divided into two types: high-frequency vocabulary and low-frequency vocabulary (Nation, cited in Apriyani et al., 2019, p. 35).

- a. High- frequency vocabulary consists of words that are frequently used in everyday language across all four language skills and in various communication situations. High-frequency vocabulary includes about 2,000-word families, of which approximately 87% appear in formal written texts and 95% are used in informal spoken conversations.
- b. Low-frequency vocabulary includes only a small proportion of words that appear in relatively short continuous texts and are rarely used in everyday English activities. This group includes approximately 1,000-word families.

Vocabulary is also divided into productive vocabulary and receptive vocabulary. Productive vocabulary consists of words that are already familiar to students, while receptive vocabulary consists of words that are unfamiliar. Vocabulary has two forms: spoken vocabulary, which is a collection of words whose meanings are understood when speaking or reading aloud, and written vocabulary, which is a collection of words whose

meanings are understood when writing or reading silently (Kamil, 2005, p.

3). In detail, vocabulary is divided into two forms:

a. Productive Vocabulary

Productive vocabulary includes words that can be used in writing and speaking. These words are familiar and often heard. In this study, the writer focused on words that were familiar and commonly heard by students.

b. Receptive Vocabulary or Recognition

Receptive vocabulary or recognition vocabulary consists of words whose meanings are understood when a person hears or reads them. These words are less familiar and are rarely heard by students, and they are usually acquired through exposure from others.

Some words may be rarely used, but when someone recognizes them, they can still understand their meanings even if not perfectly. In this study, the writer emphasized the importance of using vocabulary that was appropriate for the students. Appropriate vocabulary falls into the category of productive vocabulary because it utilizes words that are already known, familiar, and frequently encountered. Words that frequently appear in the context of the study are words that are familiar to students.

Vocabulary can be divided into two types, namely expressive vocabulary and receptive vocabulary. Expressive vocabulary includes words used to convey ideas and thoughts through speaking and writing. Meanwhile, receptive vocabulary consists of words that are understood

when reading or listening to others speak. In other words, words that are received and processed when obtaining information fall into the category of receptive vocabulary. Overall, vocabulary refers to all the words that a person knows and understands.

The main difference between the two types of vocabulary lay in their use by the writer during the study process, as explained by Kamil. According to Nation, high-frequency vocabulary consists of words that are commonly used in all four language skills and in various communication situations. This high-frequency vocabulary consists of around 2,000 word families, of which approximately 87% appear in formal written texts. More than 95% of these words are used in informal spoken conversations. Low-frequency vocabulary, on the other hand, covers only a small proportion of words found in short texts and rarely appears in everyday English. This group consists of about 1,000 word families. According to Kamil, productive vocabulary is a collection of words that can be used in writing and speaking. These words are well-known, familiar, and commonly used.

The writer focused on words that were familiar and frequently encountered. Meanwhile, receptive or recognition vocabulary is a collection of words whose meanings are understood when someone hears or reads them. These words are less familiar and are rarely used by students. Although these words are not used spontaneously, individuals can still recognize them, even if not perfectly. Both types of vocabulary have something in common, which is that they use words that are familiar

and easy to apply in everyday life according to learners' needs. In this study, the writer used a large amount of familiar vocabulary because the use of familiar and frequently used words was very important for facilitating communication in everyday life.

4. Teaching Vocabulary

Teaching and learning foreign languages are quite difficult for most foreign language learners. Language learning cannot be separated from the process of acquiring and teaching vocabulary itself. Many students think that learning vocabulary is difficult because there are so many words and no limit to how many there are. Therefore, English teachers should teach vocabulary before teaching other aspects of the language, such as speaking, reading, writing, and listening. Students who have a good grasp of vocabulary find it easier to learn other aspects of English.

Furthermore, vocabulary teaching is a fundamental aspect of learning that is widely discussed in the context of English as a foreign language. Vocabulary teaching is a very important aspect of language learning because language is essentially composed of words (Thornbury, 2002, p. 24). Therefore, teachers are required to master the material being taught so that students can understand the lesson well and become interested in and enjoy the teaching and learning process in the classroom. In vocabulary teaching, creating students' interest and enjoyment in learning is very important so that they can learn vocabulary in an enjoyable way.

In addition, teachers also need to understand appropriate teaching techniques and materials and know the factors that can increase students' interest in learning in the classroom. Thus, teachers have a very important role in vocabulary teaching so that the material presented can be well received and students can participate in language learning in a pleasant atmosphere.

In addition, a study indicates that effective vocabulary teaching views vocabulary as a core element that plays an equal role to reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, so vocabulary learning needs to be consciously and continuously integrated into the language learning process (Alshumrani, 2024, pp. 8–9). Therefore, it is important to realize that vocabulary is a crucial element in language learning. Vocabulary teaching should not be neglected or underestimated because vocabulary is the key to mastering the four language skills, namely speaking, writing, reading, and listening. Thus, vocabulary teaching plays a very important role, especially for second language learners. Good vocabulary mastery helps learners understand the language more easily and improves their ability to use the language effectively.

Based on the above explanation, it can be emphasized that vocabulary is an essential component in learning English as a foreign language. Vocabulary mastery plays a key role as the main foundation in developing the four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading,

and writing. However, vocabulary teaching often receives limited attention in the language learning process.

Therefore, it is necessary to apply effective learning strategies that are tailored to students' characteristics so that the language learning process can take place optimally. Mastering adequate vocabulary helps students understand and use English more accurately and meaningfully, so that language learning objectives can be achieved to the fullest extent possible.

5. Aspect of Vocabulary

Vocabulary mastery is not only related to students' ability to know the meaning of words, but also includes a broader understanding of the important elements that support the appropriate use of vocabulary in English language learning. In the context of learning English as a foreign language, it is not enough for students to simply memorize vocabulary; they also need to understand how vocabulary plays a role in understanding lesson material, following the teacher's instructions, and expressing ideas simply and clearly.

Therefore, vocabulary mastery is an important part of the effective language learning process. Studies show that vocabulary plays a fundamental role in developing students' language skills. Vocabulary is the main foundation in English language learning because it enables students to understand texts, participate in learning activities, and use language more confidently (Alshumrani, 2024, pp. 2–3). Vocabulary mastery not

only helps students recognize words but also supports their ability to use English meaningfully in various learning contexts. Thus, understanding vocabulary and its related aspects is an important basis for building students' vocabulary mastery, which ultimately contributes to their success in learning English. Vocabulary assessment includes quantity, meaning, spelling, and pronunciation (Qian, 2002, pp. 514–516), as follows:

a. Quantity

The quantity aspect refers to the number of words that students know and can recognize. This aspect shows the extent of students' vocabulary breadth. The more words they master, the greater their ability to understand texts and express ideas orally and in writing. In this study, the quantity aspect was used to measure the increase in students' vocabulary after applying the Semantic Mapping technique. Through Semantic Mapping, students were encouraged to identify, group, and develop vocabulary related to the theme of fables, so that they could expand their vocabulary systematically and contextually.

b. Meaning

The aspect of meaning relates to students' ability to understand the meaning of vocabulary accurately according to the context in which it is used. Understanding meaning is not limited to the ability to translate words, but also includes understanding the relationship between meanings and the role of vocabulary in constructing the content of a text. In narrative text learning, understanding meaning is very important

so that students can grasp the storyline, characters, and moral messages conveyed. Through the Semantic Mapping technique, students are helped to associate new vocabulary with their existing knowledge, so that the meaning of words can be understood more deeply and meaningfully in context.

c. Spelling

The spelling aspect refers to students' ability to write vocabulary with correct spelling according to English language rules. Spelling accuracy indicates students' understanding of written word forms and plays an important role in the clarity of meaning in written communication. In this study, the spelling aspect was assessed through students' work in the Semantic Mapping activity. This activity provides students with the opportunity to write vocabulary repeatedly and in a structured manner, thereby helping to improve spelling accuracy and reduce vocabulary writing errors.

d. Pronunciation

The aspect of pronunciation relates to students' ability to pronounce vocabulary correctly so that it can be clearly understood by listeners. Mastery of pronunciation is an important part of vocabulary mastery, especially in supporting students' speaking skills. In the context of this study, the pronunciation aspect was used to assess the extent to which students were able to pronounce vocabulary that had been learned through the Semantic Mapping technique. By linking vocabulary in

semantic mappings and practicing pronunciation orally, students are expected to improve their pronunciation accuracy and confidence in using the vocabulary when speaking.

B. General Semantic Mapping Techniques

Semantic mapping is a teaching strategy used to organize and represent concepts visually. Through semantic mapping, students are encouraged to explore their prior knowledge of new words by connecting them to other related words or phrases that have similar meanings. This strategy helps students understand vocabulary more deeply by showing the relationships between words in a clear and structured way. In the process of developing the four language skills, teachers often apply semantic mapping because it is considered appropriate and effective for teaching vocabulary. This technique creates a fun and engaging learning atmosphere, allowing students to actively participate in the learning process. Semantic mapping also provides students with meaningful challenges that motivate them to focus more on vocabulary learning. As a result, this strategy supports students in expanding their vocabulary knowledge and forming new words more effectively. In this study, students' perceptions of how engaging and motivating they found Semantic Mapping were explored Mapping.

Furthermore, understanding meaning in language is an important aspect of English language learning. Semantic mapping is the study of meaning communicated through language. Understanding the meaning of language is the basis for applying semantic mapping techniques as a way to improve

language skills (Heimlich & Pittleman, 1986, pp. 5–6). Through semantic mapping techniques, students are assisted in organizing and connecting language concepts systematically so that the meaning of language can be better understood.

Therefore, language learning using semantic mapping is necessary so that students can learn language more effectively, communicate meaning more clearly, and improve their overall English language skills. This technique is used as a strategy that supports the development of language skills. Understanding meaning is an important foundation in language learning. Semantics is the study of the meaning of words and sentences analyzed independently of their context of use and is considered a descriptive field of study (Griffiths, 2006, p. 15).

Semantics seeks to explain the nature of linguistic knowledge and meaning possessed by speakers when using language. In this regard, semantic mapping is a technique that helps students examine and organize the meaning of words based on their relationships. This study also investigates students' perceptions regarding how clearly Semantic Mapping helps them understand relationships between vocabulary. Therefore, the use of semantic mapping in language learning can support vocabulary development by helping students better understand and expand their vocabulary.

In addition, semantic mapping is a technique that allows students to explore their vocabulary knowledge by organizing new words into visual maps connected to related words or phrases. This approach encourages

students to understand the meaning of words more deeply by visualizing the relationships between vocabulary. Semantic mapping in language teaching helps students memorize and understand vocabulary more effectively by strengthening their understanding of word meanings (Wisran, 2021, p. 78). The application of semantic mapping in the teaching and learning process can improve students' vocabulary knowledge because it actively involves them in organizing and remembering words. This study also aims to capture students' perceptions of how useful Semantic Mapping is in helping them remember and categorize vocabulary.

Therefore, implementing semantic mapping strategies in the classroom is very important because it supports students in acquiring and retaining frequently used vocabulary and improving their overall vocabulary mastery. Moreover, semantic is a branch of linguistics that studies meaning in language at various levels, from words to sentences and larger discourse units (Betti and Igaab, 2021, p. 3). Semantic mapping is a technique in vocabulary learning that helps students expand their vocabulary knowledge by organizing new words into a visual network of related terms. This method allows students to understand the relationships between vocabulary more clearly, thereby strengthening their understanding and memory. Studies show that the use of semantic mapping actively engages students in categorizing and connecting new vocabulary, which can improve both memorization and overall vocabulary mastery. This study considers students' perceptions of

how Semantic Mapping assists them in understanding connections among words and in feeling confident about using new vocabulary.

Therefore, the application of semantic mapping techniques in the classroom is very important, as it supports students in acquiring frequently used vocabulary.

1. The Purpose of Semantic Mapping

Semantic mapping is a visual technique used in language learning to help students organize their understanding in a meaningful way. By using concept maps, students can connect new words with categories and concepts they already know. The main purpose of semantic mapping is to make the vocabulary learning process more structured so that students do not just memorize words randomly, but understand the conceptual relationships between words. Thus, students are able to remember vocabulary longer and use it in the right context. In this study, students' perceptions of how helpful and clear Semantic Mapping are were also explored to assess its effectiveness from the learners' point of view.

In learning terms, semantic mapping strategies aim to help students organize new words meaningfully so that the relationships between words become clearer. The purpose of mapping is to facilitate students in connecting new learning with prior knowledge so that the process of storing and retrieving information becomes easier (Al-Khasawneh and Al-Hawamdeh, 2023, pp. 924–925).

In addition, their study findings using a quasi-experimental design showed that the experimental group using this technique had higher vocabulary mastery than the control group. This study also considers how students perceive the usefulness, clarity, and engagement of Semantic Mapping in helping them connect new and prior knowledge. Thus, it can be concluded that semantic mapping not only functions as a visual tool but also as an effective learning strategy to improve retention and conceptual understanding of vocabulary in the context of learning English as a foreign language.

Specifically, this technique is designed to help students build associations between meanings and understandings, making the process of mastering and retaining vocabulary more effective (Baxromovna, 2023, pp. 1036–1037). Furthermore, students are directed to group words based on specific categories and connect them through concept maps, so that the relationship between new understanding and familiar understanding can be seen more clearly. The study additionally examines students' perceptions of how organizing words in Semantic Mapping helps them understand relationships between vocabulary and feel more confident in using it.

As a result, students are able to expand their lexical networks and improve their vocabulary retrieval skills because words are arranged in a more organized and meaningful structure. Thus, the purpose of semantic mapping is not only to increase the amount of vocabulary students

understand, but also to strengthen their ability to organize and use vocabulary contextually.

2. Advantages of the Semantic Mapping Technique

Semantic mapping techniques offer several advantages in teaching English vocabulary. First, this technique can motivate students to actively participate in vocabulary learning because it allows them to explore and organize words in a fun and interactive way. Students are encouraged to think carefully about the meaning of words, organize words into categories, form related word definitions, practice spelling, and understand how words are related to each other. Students taught using semantic mapping show significantly higher post-test scores compared to their pre-test results, indicating an improvement in vocabulary organization and retention (Daud & Malabar, 2025, p. 339).

This study also examines students' perceptions of Semantic Mapping, including how helpful and clear they find it for organizing and understanding vocabulary. Semantic mapping can increase student motivation, as students can discover new vocabulary independently, work individually or collaboratively, and strive to achieve the best results in class activities. It is found that student engagement and vocabulary mastery increase when semantic mapping is applied in classroom teaching. Semantic mapping proves to be more effective than traditional methods in helping students expand their vocabulary and improve comprehension,

highlighting that students who use semantic mapping perform better than their peers who learn through conventional techniques.

In addition, semantic mapping techniques offer several advantages in teaching English vocabulary, as they help students organize and use vocabulary more effectively. Students who are taught using semantic mapping demonstrate significant improvement in vocabulary usage skills compared to those taught through conventional methods, indicating that this strategy enhances learners' ability to organize and retain vocabulary (Attia, 2022, pp. 3–4). This technique encourages learners to think more deeply about relationships between words, categorize vocabulary into meaningful groups, and establish connections that support long-term retention. Furthermore, students engaged in semantic mapping activities tend to show higher levels of motivation and participation in classroom learning, as they are given opportunities to work individually or collaboratively in exploring word meanings and constructing lexical networks. Overall, the application of semantic mapping not only improves vocabulary mastery but also promotes active engagement and cognitive involvement in the learning process.

Overall, semantic mapping techniques have significant advantages in teaching English vocabulary because they can increase motivation, engagement, and students' ability to organize and remember vocabulary more effectively. By encouraging students to group words based on meaning categories, build connections between meanings, and work

independently and collaboratively, this technique helps strengthen lexical networks and supports long-term retention.

Understanding students' perceptions of Semantic Mapping provides insights into the subjective effectiveness of the technique and its acceptance in classroom learning. The application of semantic mapping is considered more effective than traditional methods, with students who use this technique showing improved performance and better mastery of English language learning.

3. Disadvantages of the Semantic Mapping Technique

Although semantic mapping offers many benefits in vocabulary teaching, this technique also has several limitations that need to be considered in classroom practice. Furthermore, because this technique relies on students' ability to identify relationships between words, students with less prior vocabulary knowledge may have difficulty completing the map independently and often require a dictionary or teacher guidance. Students' perceptions of these challenges are important to consider, as some report feeling confused or frustrated during mapping activities, which can affect their motivation and engagement in learning (Rahmawati & Ahmad, 2024, pp. 695–696). Teachers need to provide structured guidance, model examples, and ongoing support to help students overcome these challenges and maximize the benefits of semantic mapping in vocabulary learning.

The application of semantic mapping techniques does not always have a significant impact on improving comprehension, as shown in an international study examining the use of this technique in foreign language learning (Mohammed & Malo, 2020, pp. 332–334). The results of this study indicate that some students have difficulty in utilizing semantic maps optimally due to limited prior knowledge and a lack of understanding of the conceptual relationships between words.

This condition prevents students from developing meaningful networks effectively, thereby reducing the effectiveness of the vocabulary learning process. Studies emphasize that the effectiveness of semantic mapping techniques is highly dependent on student readiness, initial vocabulary mastery, and the role of teachers in providing adequate guidance and scaffolding during the learning process.

Based on the above description, it can be concluded that although semantic mapping techniques have the potential to help students develop their vocabulary, their application also has a number of limitations that need to be considered. Students' difficulties in connecting words, limited initial vocabulary, and inability to understand meaning relationships independently may reduce the effectiveness of this technique in learning.

In addition, findings from studies show that without structured guidance and direction from teachers, semantic mapping does not always result in significant improvements in vocabulary mastery. Thus, understanding students' perceptions regarding the difficulties they face and

their experience with Semantic Mapping is crucial for tailoring instruction and ensuring the technique achieves its full potential. Therefore, the success of semantic mapping techniques is highly dependent on student readiness, the selection of appropriate materials, and the active role of teachers in providing examples, guidance, and ongoing support throughout the learning process.

4. Teaching Vocabulary Mastery Through Semantic Mapping

Teaching vocabulary through semantic mapping involves creating visual representations of related words and categories, allowing students to connect new vocabulary with prior knowledge. This strategy helps make learning more meaningful and memorable. Semantic mapping, often implemented as semantic maps, allows students to organize words conceptually and understand relationships between them (Nation & Waring, 1997, pp. 7–8). Students' interest and engagement are crucial; by actively creating these visual maps, they can improve both comprehension and retention of new vocabulary. In this study, students' perceptions of using Semantic Mapping are also assessed to understand how they experience and respond to this visual learning method.

furthermore, Broomle (cited in Ibrahim, 2017, p. 185) states that “semantic maps or web is a graphic representation of categories of information and their relationship to each other.” In semantic mapping activities, students are asked to categorize target words provided by the teacher and then find new words for each category, which are organized

into visual semantic maps. The Semantic Mapping technique has to be interesting and enjoyable so that students feel involved and motivated to learn in class. In this study, students' perceptions of using Semantic Mapping are also examined to determine how they experience, enjoy, and understand vocabulary through this visual method. Teachers need to prepare materials carefully to ensure that students prefer learning with this technique.

Therefore, semantic mapping is an effective strategy in vocabulary teaching because it helps students connect new words with prior knowledge, making the learning process more meaningful and memorable. This strategy allows students to organize words visually and understand the relationships between words, which improves vocabulary mastery and retention. In addition, applying semantic mapping in an interesting and enjoyable way can increase students' interest, motivation, and active participation in learning. Therefore, teachers need to prepare materials carefully to ensure that this technique can be applied effectively.

C. Teaching Vocabulary at Eight Grade in Junior High School

Vocabulary teaching at the eighth-grade level of junior high school is an important part of English language learning because vocabulary mastery plays a significant role in students' text comprehension and communication skills. At this level, students are required to understand various types of texts, especially narrative texts, which contain vocabulary related to actions, characters, and events. Vocabulary mastery enables students to understand

reading material more effectively and supports the development of other language skills such as writing and speaking. Therefore, vocabulary teaching in eighth grade should be carried out systematically and contextually in accordance with students' learning needs.

Furthermore, vocabulary learning effectiveness can be improved through meaningful activities and active student involvement. Vocabulary learning is more effective when students are actively engaged with words through meaningful activities rather than simply memorizing lists of words. Junior high school students benefit from teaching strategies that allow them to analyze, organize, and associate vocabulary with its meaning and context of use (Alqahtani, 2015, pp. 22–23). This approach helps students develop a deeper mastery of vocabulary and improves their ability to remember new words.

In addition, vocabulary learning in eighth grade should also be integrated with reading activities, especially through narrative texts. Learning vocabulary through reading provides repeated exposure to words in meaningful contexts, thereby strengthening students' understanding of the meaning, form, and use of words (Teng, 2020, pp. 3–4). Narrative texts such as legends and fables are suitable for junior high school students because they present vocabulary in a familiar story structure. With text-based learning, students can understand how words function naturally in sentences and discourse.

Moreover, vocabulary teaching in eighth grade junior high school needs to be done systematically and contextually so that students can understand and remember new words effectively. Effective vocabulary teaching involves activities that help students understand the meaning of words in context and the relationships between words, rather than simply memorizing vocabulary lists (Thornbury, cited in Workie et al., 2020, p. 135). This approach is relevant to this study, in which semantic mapping techniques are used to visualize the relationships between vocabulary, so that students can develop more meaningful and comprehensive vocabulary mastery.

Overall, vocabulary teaching for eighth-grade junior high school students has to consider the learning context, active student involvement, and the use of strategies that support meaningful word comprehension. A combination of text-based learning, contextual approaches, and techniques such as semantic mapping can help students not only learn new words but also understand how those words interact in discourse. Thus, students' vocabulary mastery improves overall, which in turn strengthens their ability to read, write, and communicate in English.

D. Related Study

The researcher reviewed several previous studies that are relevant to support this study. The first study was conducted by Daud and Malabar et al. (2025) entitled *The Use of Semantic Mapping Strategy to Enhance ELF Students' Vocabulary Mastery at the Seventh Grade of SMP Negeri 1 Tapa*.

Using a quasi-experimental design with one group pre-test and post-test, this study measured students' vocabulary performance before and after treatment.

The results showed a significant improvement, with the average score increasing from 46.36 on the pre-test to 70.68 on the post-test, supported by statistical analysis indicating a significant effect of the technique. This study shows that semantic mapping helps students organize words conceptually, understand the relationships between vocabulary, and remember new words more effectively, making it suitable for junior high school students who are developing basic English vocabulary skills.

The second study was conducted by Maulidia and Angraini (2025) entitled *The Utilization of Semantic Mapping to Teach Vocabulary at SMP Tri Dharma Palembang*. The study examined the impact of semantic mapping strategies on students' English vocabulary mastery among 29 eighth-grade students. Using a pretest–posttest single group design, the study recorded a significant increase in the average score, from 59.31 on the pretest to 82.20 on the posttest after the application of semantic mapping. Statistical analysis using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test showed that the semantic mapping strategy had a significant effect on students' vocabulary mastery. The increase was significant ($p < 0.001$), which indicates that semantic mapping has a positive effect on students' vocabulary mastery, English comprehension, and learning motivation.

The third study was conducted by Ahmad and Aturahma (2023) entitled *The Effect of Semantic Mapping Strategy on Students' English Vocabulary*

Mastery. Using a single-group pre-test and post-test design, the study recorded a significant increase in the average vocabulary score, rising from 59.31 on the pre-test to 82.20 on the post-test after the application of semantic mapping. Statistical analysis using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test showed that this increase was significant ($p < 0.001$), indicating that semantic mapping has a positive effect on students' English vocabulary mastery and learning motivation.

Based on previous relevant studies, this study has a similar focus, namely the effect of semantic mapping in teaching English vocabulary. However, this study has several important differences. This study specifically targets eighth-grade students at Joseph Khatulistiwa Junior High School, with a different number of participants, learning materials, and classroom conditions compared to previous studies.

In addition, while previous studies generally use quasi-experimental designs or classroom action research, this study uses a quantitative pre-experimental design with a single-group pre-test and post-test model, which focuses specifically on measuring the effect of semantic mapping on students' vocabulary acquisition. In its application, the semantic mapping technique is realized through semantic maps as a form of concept mapping visualization that helps students systematically group and connect vocabulary.

By comparing pre-test and post-test scores, this study aims to provide clear numerical evidence of the effectiveness of semantic mapping in improving vocabulary mastery. This approach fills gaps in both the context and

research design, thereby providing a more accurate understanding of how the semantic mapping technique quantitatively affects the vocabulary mastery of eighth-grade students at Joseph Khatulistiwa Junior High School. The focus of this study is The Effect of Semantic Mapping Technique on Students' Vocabulary Mastery in Grade Eight at SMP Joseph Khatulistiwa.

E. Framework

Vocabulary is an important component in English language learning because it plays a major role in helping students understand texts and convey ideas both orally and in writing. At the eighth-grade level, students learn various types of texts, especially narrative texts, which require mastery of vocabulary related to characters, events, and storylines. Therefore, appropriate learning techniques are needed to help students develop vocabulary mastery in a focused and meaningful way.

One technique that can be used in teaching vocabulary is semantic mapping. Semantic mapping is a type of concept mapping that presents one main concept in the center, which is then connected to related words that are grouped into several branches. In learning narrative texts, especially fables, semantic mapping helps students organize their understanding of the characters, character traits, actions, and events in the story. By grouping vocabulary into clear categories, students can understand the relationships between words more systematically, understand the meaning of vocabulary, and improve their memory of the vocabulary they have learned.

In addition, the use of semantic mapping encourages active student engagement because students directly identify, group, and develop their understanding based on the context of the story. In this study, semantic mapping is used as an independent variable to improve the vocabulary mastery of eighth-grade students as the dependent variable. Vocabulary mastery includes understanding word meanings, spelling, pronunciation, and word usage in the context of narrative texts. Through the application of semantic mapping, students are guided to organize vocabulary systematically so that it can be used more appropriately in English language learning.

This study used a one-group pre-test and post-test design. Before the pre-test, students were first given an initial questionnaire to determine their attitudes, interests, and perceptions of vocabulary learning before the application of the semantic mapping technique. The pre-test was given to determine students' initial vocabulary mastery before the application of semantic mapping. Next, the treatment was given by teaching vocabulary using the semantic mapping technique in several meetings. After the treatment was completed, a post-test was given to determine changes in students' vocabulary mastery after the learning process.

The data obtained from the pre-test and post-test results were then analysed using statistical analysis to determine whether there was a significant effect of the use of semantic mapping techniques on students' mastery of competencies. In addition to the test data, questionnaires were also given to students after the post-test to determine their responses, interests, and

perceptions of the use of semantic mapping techniques in vocabulary learning. The results of the questionnaire were described descriptively to support the quantitative data obtained from the test.

Furthermore, the results of the data analysis were used as a basis for drawing conclusions about the effectiveness of using semantic mapping techniques in improving the comprehension of eighth-grade students. Based on this conceptual framework, this study aimed to determine the effect and effectiveness of using semantic mapping in improving the vocabulary mastery of eighth-grade students.

The structure of the study as follow:

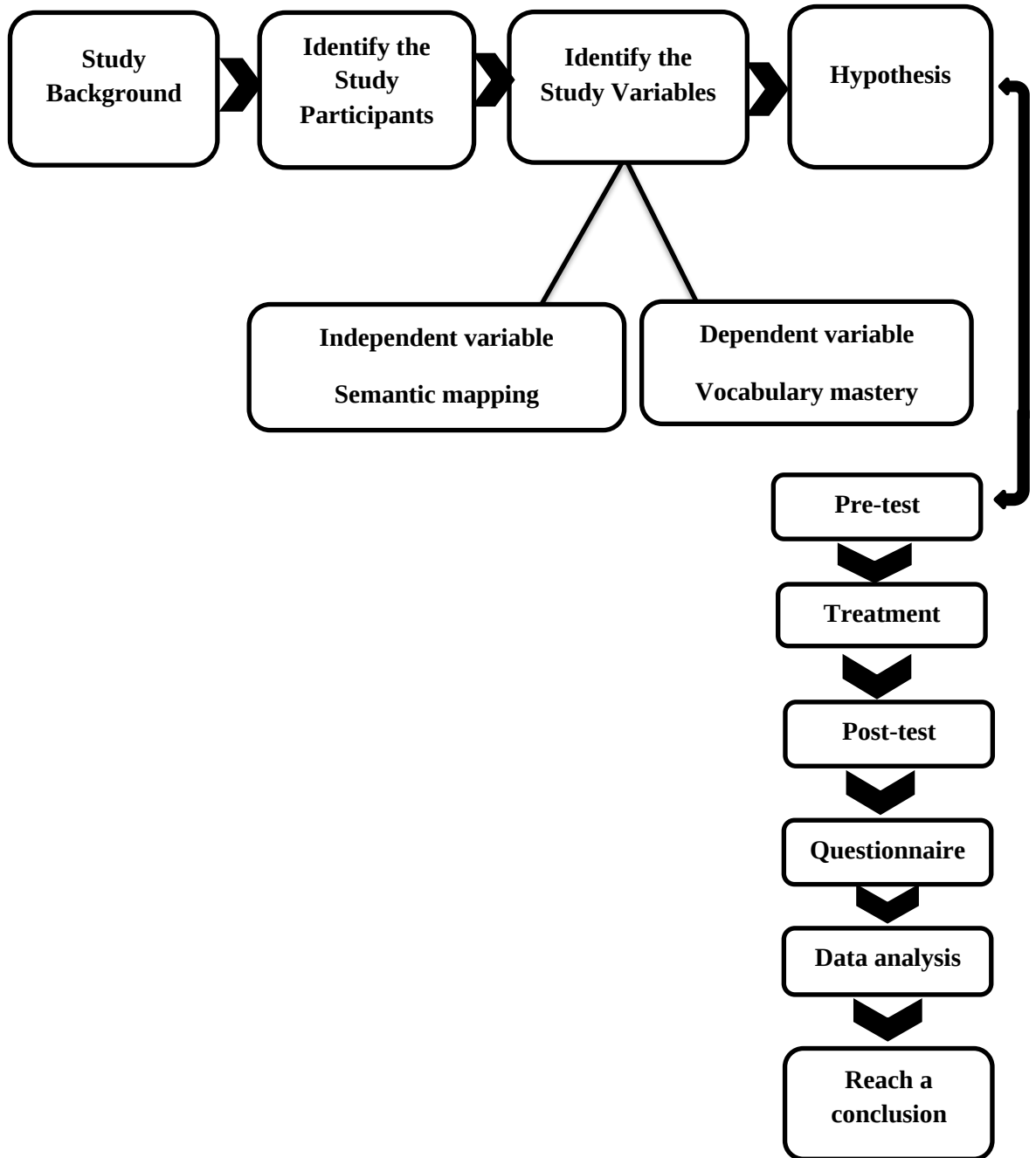


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework