Chapter I: Introduction

Background of the Study

Vocabulary is a vital aspect in language because it appears in every skill of language (listening, speaking, reading and writing skill). One of the biggest problems with vocabulary learning is that what students learn today is often forgotten tomorrow. Most of the students have experienced this problem. A psychology research shows that students do not forget what they have learned gradually. Instead, most of the students forget what they learned occurs within 20 minutes after they have first 'learned' something. More is forgotten within one hour, and still more within 8 hours (Ebbinghaus, 1994). This problem also applies in learning vocabulary; students are hard to remember the words and its concept and make them feel difficult to learn vocabulary.

Mastering vocabulary is very important for the students to learn English as a foreign language. That is why everybody who learns English should know the words. The mastery of vocabulary can support students in speaking when they are communicating with other people and also they can write and translate the meaning of words. If students do not know the meaning of words, they will not be able to speak, write and translate in English. The students can be said gaining progress in English by the mastery of vocabulary (Ghebart, 1990).

Most students spend many years studying English grammar, but they still cannot speak, read, write or listen fluently. Grammar is only part of a language. No doubt, knowing the grammar can help students speak, listen, read and write correctly. However, more importantly, students need to have a good vocabulary size to speak, read, listen and write naturally and effectively (Ghebart, 1990).

The researcher conducted the preliminary study at SMK Negeri 1 Gorontalo at class *UPW Usaha Perjalanan Wisata* in order to identify the problem in the class. English materials in Tourism class such as tour guiding and ticketing international requires a good mastery of vocabulary skill, this very reason drives the researcher to choose the Tourism class as her subject of the research and the object of the application of Concept Cards Strategy which the researcher strongly believe enrich their vocabulary skill especially in tourism. The researcher observed teaching learning vocabulary process. At the beginning, the classroom teacher started the lesson by having the students to remember previous material then introduced the new material for that day, descriptive text about Tourism. In whilst activity, she distributed the sample text for all students and asked them one by one to read the text aloud. After that, the teacher asked the students to translate the meaning of text. Instead of translating the text, students waited for the teacher to translate the text by herself. The teacher did not encourage her students to try to translate the text by themselves. This could happen because most of the students did not have good vocabulary in order to understand the text and also the teacher did not push her students more and involve them in teaching learning activity. The researcher

also had done interview to some students and they realized that their lack of vocabulary so that they have difficulties in expressing their idea.

Recent days, many researchers conduct number of studies to determine which strategy that is best use to teach vocabulary skill such as *Word Wall, Vocabulary Anchor, Vocabulary Cartoons, Wordsplash, Crossword Puzzles, Learning Maps etc*. Every strategy indeed has its advantages and uniqueness but the strategy that researcher believes can increase students' vocabulary especially in descriptive text and overcome problems found in the classroom is Concept Cards Strategy. The researcher determine to apply Concept Card Strategy in descriptive text because first; descriptive text reflects the real description of things in life. Second, descriptive can help students link the information in the text with the real life situation. Tourism class students often encounter with describing places or historical event of the places to their visitors. A good description requires good vocabulary mastery because in describing something, students use all type of part of speech in English. That is the importance why the researcher teaches descriptive text by using Concept Cards Strategy.

Concept Cards help students learn vocabulary words. Concept Cards encourage students to look at words in context, study the connotations of words, and use the words in their own sentence. Concept Cards help students learn both general and technical vocabulary that they encounter in their readings. They encourage students to interact with new words. This results in greater retention of the words' meanings, as well as an enhanced ability to use the words correctly in writing (Brunner, 2001).

Research from McCoy (2004) and Dr. Grant Conway (2003) by using Concept Card Strategy to enrich students' vocabulary mastery showed a great success while most of their students could create sentences from the concept cards that they had made. McCoy and Conway claimed that, students' ability to create sentences from unfamiliar words because students already understand the concept of the word. The successes from past research encourage the researcher to conduct this newly research on different level of students. As we know, English proficiency in Indonesia is way different with Canada and Vietnam where both previous researchers conducted their research so it is importance for researcher to do an experiment first before she decides to apply Concept Card Strategy in real school life. The successes from both previous researchers also encouraged researcher to prove whether Concept Card Strategy is applicable in Indonesia especially Gorontalo or not.

Problem Statement

Vocabulary holds a very important role for students in order to make the knowledge transfer runs in a good track. Students who have good vocabulary knowledge make the process of teaching learning easier, meanwhile, students who do not have or lack of vocabulary knowledge have to struggle more to understand the material. The fact is, based on the preliminary study in SMK Negeri 1 Gorontalo at class *UPW Usaha Perjalanan Wisata*, the problem occurring in this class is most students were lack of vocabulary. They did not have good vocabulary knowledge therefore; they had no understanding about the material which they have learned.

Research Question

Based on the previous explanation, the researcher may formulate the research question as follows:"Do the students who are taught by Concept Cards Strategy have better enrichment in vocabulary or not?"

Objective of the Research

This study is designed to have the following objective:"To find out the significance difference in enriching vocabulary between the students who are taught with Concept Cards Strategy"

Hypothesis

In order to answer the research question, the research hypothesis related to the problem is formulated:"The students who are taught with Concept Cards strategy in teaching reading descriptive text have better enrichment in vocabulary"

Significance of the Study

This study has three-folds in significance. Firstly, for the teachers, they can improve their ability in teaching vocabulary in the class. Additionally, teachers are also motivated to be more creative in teaching process. Secondly, Concept Cards strategy can help the students to enrich their vocabulary knowledge by directly involving to the words meaning. And the last, for future researchers, it is suggested to conduct this strategy towards other kinds of research at different level of students.

Scope and Limitation

This study focused on the study of vocabulary by using Concept Card Strategy in descriptive text at SMK Negeri 1 Gorontalo at class *UPW Usaha Perjalanan Wisata*. The test material that had been used only restricted to those which passed validity and reliability test.

Definition of Key Terms

1. Vocabulary : Knowledge of words and word meanings

2. Descriptive text : a text which says what a person, animal or a thing is like. Its purpose is to describe and reveal a particular person, place, or thing.

3. Concept Card Strategy: Strategy that encourages students to look at words in context, studies the connotations of words, and uses the words in their own sentences.