

THE USE OF SEMANTIC MAPPING TO DEVELOP VOCABULARY LEARNING AMONG YEAR FOUR PUPILS IN A PRIMARY SCHOOL IN THE RURAL AREA OF PAHANG

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SULTAN IDRIS EDUCATION UNIVERSITY

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LEARNING AMONG YEAR FOUR PUPILS IN A PRIMARY
SCHOOL IN THE RURAL AREA OF PAHANG

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at investigating the use of semantic mapping in vocabulary learning among a group of Year Four pupils in a primary school located in the rural area of Pahang. Despite the importance of vocabulary in ESL learning, quite a number of Malaysian pupils are still having a limited vocabulary, shown through the palpable view of their poor English performance. Using the quasi-experimental mixed-method design, data were gained by conducting pre- and post-tests, distributing a questionnaire to the pupils in the experimental group, and conducting an interview with three pupils selected using the purposive sampling method in order to further understand how the participants view the use of semantic mapping for vocabulary learning. Interestingly, despite an improvement made by both control and experimental groups in the post-test, the total improvement scores for the latter exceeded the former. The survey conducted showed that a majority of pupils in the experimental group had a high level of agreement in the use of semantic mapping for vocabulary learning. The data from the interview also supported these findings as the participants affirmed that using semantic mapping made their vocabulary learning easy. They found that the strategy helped them to learn and memorise words better. In conclusion, the use of semantic mapping can significantly develop pupils' vocabulary learning and helps pupils to memorise words better. The implication of this study has provided an understanding of how semantic mapping can be used to develop vocabulary learning among pupils. It has helped them to understand and make use of their vocabulary knowledge, resulting in more effective vocabulary learning.



PENGUNAAN PETA SEMANTIK UNTUK MEMBANGUNKAN PEMBELAJARAN PERBENDAHARAAN KATA DALAM KALANGAN MURID TAHUN EMPAT DI SEBUAH SEKOLAH RENDAH DI KAWASAN LUAR BANDAR PAHANG

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji penggunaan peta semantik dalam pembelajaran kosa kata dalam kalangan sekumpulan murid Tahun Empat di sebuah sekolah rendah yang terletak di kawasan pedalaman Pahang. Di sebalik kepentingan perbendaharaan kata dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua, sebilangan besar murid di Malaysia masih mempunyai perbendaharaan kata yang terhad. Ini terbukti melalui tahap prestasi Bahasa Inggeris mereka yang lemah. Menggunakan kaedah campuran kuasi-eksperimen, data diperoleh dengan menjalankan ujian pra dan pasca, mengedarkan soal selidik kepada murid dalam kumpulan eksperimen, dan menjalankan temu bual dengan tiga orang murid yang dipilih menggunakan kaedah persampelan bertujuan untuk melanjutkan memahami bagaimana peserta melihat penggunaan pemetaan semantik untuk pembelajaran kosa kata dengan lebih mendalam. Menariknya, walaupun terdapat peningkatan yang dibuat oleh kedua-dua kumpulan kawalan dan eksperimen dalam ujian pasca, jumlah skor peningkatan untuk kumpulan eksperimen adalah lebih tinggi daripada jumlah skor peningkatan untuk kumpulan kawalan. Tinjauan terhadap kumpulan eksperimen menunjukkan majoriti murid dalam kumpulan tersebut mempunyai tahap persetujuan yang tinggi dalam penggunaan peta semantik untuk pembelajaran kosa kata. Temu bual yang dijalankan juga menyokong dapatan ini apabila peserta kajian menegaskan bahawa peta semantik memudahkan pembelajaran perbendaharaan kata mereka. Mereka mendapati bahawa strategi itu membantu mereka untuk belajar dan mengingat perkataan dengan lebih baik. Kesimpulannya, penggunaan peta semantik dalam pembelajaran kosa kata adalah signifikan dan membantu murid mengingat kosa kata yang dipelajari dengan lebih baik. Implikasi kajian ini telah memberikan pemahaman tentang bagaimana peta semantik boleh digunakan untuk membangunkan pembelajaran kosa kata dalam kalangan murid. Strategi tersebut membantu mereka memahami dan menggunakan pengetahuan perbendaharaan kata mereka, menghasilkan pembelajaran kosa kata yang lebih berkesan.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CDT	Cognitive Development Theory
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
DLP	Dual Language Programme
ESL	English as a Second Language
HIP	Highly Immersive Programme
ICT	Information and Communication
MOE	Malaysian Ministry of Education
MUET	Malaysian University English Test
UPSR	<i>Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah</i>
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

As an introduction, this chapter provides a general overview of the study. It begins with the background of the study that describes generally the study, especially regarding the importance of the research ideas on the use of semantic mapping for vocabulary learning. Next, the problem statement will be presented to discuss what the problem is all about and describe the issue that triggers this study. This is followed by a further elaboration on the purpose of the study and the objective of the study described in a specific, measurable, accessible, and realistic manner. Additionally, the research questions, research hypothesis, and conceptual framework also will be introduced in this chapter. The operational definition is presented to explain the key concepts based on the context of the study. Last but not least, this chapter ends with the limitations and the significance of the study.

1.2 Background of the Study

Nowadays, English has become more than just a language to learn as it has gained the status of a global language that is widely used in all aspects of life, especially in the media and internet, international businesses as well as worldwide communication. According to Thirusanku and Melor (2014), the language has also been regarded as an important tool for development and knowledge acquisition. Being the second language in Malaysia, it is taught as a compulsory subject in all primary and secondary schools. Prior to pursuing tertiary education, Malaysian students are required to sit for the Malaysian University English Test (MUET) and achieve a certain band or level of proficiency before they enroll in universities.

Realising the importance of mastering the language, the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE) strives to strengthen the command of English among the learners. In 2016 for example, the Highly Immersive Programme (HIP) and the Dual Language Programme (DLP) were introduced under the “Upholding the Malay Language and Strengthening Command of English” policy in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013 – 2025 (The Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013). The HIP serves as a platform for pupils to use and practice English beyond the classroom instructions, whereas the DLP provides more opportunities for pupils to get exposed to English in a formal classroom setting as it is used as the medium of instruction and communication in Science, Mathematics, Information and Communication (ICT), and Design and Technology lessons.

A major change in the teaching and learning of English is also made with the implementation of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in the curriculum, to assess and describe in detailed pupils' English language ability in terms of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, according to the international standard, rather than the previously vague traditional description using letter grades and numerical scores in examinations. The aim of the newly revised curriculum aligned to the CEFR and National Education Philosophy is to help pupils to acquire the language so they can use it in their daily lives. English is taught for pupils to be able to communicate confidently, read and comprehend various materials as well as write different texts using appropriate language (MOE, 2018) and these objectives can only be achieved with an extensive vocabulary because it is a central part in language acquisition (Decarrico, 2001; Zimmerman, 1997).

Although some attempts have been made to address this issue, Lee et al. (2019) have discovered that there are still fluctuations in the present literature on vocabulary instruction, especially among young learners. Hence, more researches are required to warrant a better understanding of vocabulary learning as this would help to find the best strategy for learners to develop their vocabulary, hence perform better both in acquiring desired language proficiency and academic achievement.

1.3 Problem Statement

Vocabulary plays a great role for learners in acquiring a language as it helps learners to understand and use the language better. It is said to be part of L1 or L2 acquisition



because learners would tend to make an association of meaning between both languages (Barcroft, 2016). They would consciously or unconsciously create a mental association or mapping between word forms and meanings in their attempt to connect the two languages, helping them to especially understand the second language better. A person may learn vocabulary incidentally when he or she acquire new words and lexical phrases from context without intending so, or maybe intentionally when the learning occurs on purpose like preparing for a quiz, a test, or maybe just for personal interest fulfillment and self-development. Vocabulary can also be learnt in a naturalistic setting if it occurs outside the classroom and outside of an instructional program, as well as in an instructed setting like in a classroom or within an instructional program.

Harmon et al. (2009) stated that learners' vocabulary development is an important aspect for their language development as it allows the learners to comprehend different kinds of language materials easily. Having rich vocabulary also allows learners to read fluently and comprehend different kinds of reading materials easily. It is often considered as a bonus to understanding a text and becoming successful ESL learners or users since an extensive vocabulary aids expressions and communication as well as enables learners to use the structures and functions they may have learnt for comprehensible and effective communication (Barcroft, 2016; Nation, 2013).

In contrast, due to the essentials of vocabulary in language learning, learners with insufficient vocabulary size would normally be struggling to perform well in every aspect and component of a target language itself. They would also have difficulties to efficiently express themselves due to their limited vocabulary to use (Alqahtani, 2015). Young learners who learn English as a second language found that reading can be





tedious and tough as they have a limited vocabulary. Vocabulary is also strongly linked with reading comprehension (Margosein et al., 1982), a central part of the reading process (Salman Sabbah, 2020). Therefore, it is important for pupils to have adequate vocabulary knowledge as limitation of vocabulary would not only deprive pupils of the enjoyment in reading, but it would also demotivate them to read extensively and voluntarily as they could not understand the text, consequently found it not meaningful.

In Malaysian primary schools, pupils are said to have limited opportunities for vocabulary learning due to the tendency to use merely rote memorisation technique in which they learn word meaning verbally without any non-verbal input (Wang & Hamidah, 2019). A study by Chong and Kee (2019) has identified that English language learners in Malaysia, especially in primary schools are having difficulty to retain the new vocabulary learnt which could result in poor reading comprehension as well as a major obstacle to writing. This is supported by the data from The Ministry of Education Malaysia (2019) regarding the English result in the 2019 national primary school examination or better known as UPSR (*Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah*) which shows a palpable view of poor mastery of English. The UPSR English subject consists of two papers; Paper 1 tests on the comprehension component whereas Paper 2 consists of writing and composition components, which involve the use and production of a wide vocabulary. In 2019, English Paper 1 (Comprehension) scored the third-highest percentage of candidates who failed to achieve the minimum level (14.87%) whereas English Paper 2 (Composition) recorded the highest percentage of 23.34%, as documented in the report. This issue shows that our pupils are still struggling to learn and understand the language while our National Education Blueprint 2013-2025 aims





to equip pupils with bilingual proficiency for them to be globally competitive (MOE, 2013).

For the comprehension part, pupils not only need to know most of the words in the texts, but they should also be able to grasp the main idea in a text as well as determine the meaning of many other unfamiliar words from the contextual clues in order to answer the comprehension questions. Pupils are also asked to give their own opinions and reasonings, requiring the use and production of a wide vocabulary as well as a deep understanding of the text read. However, many pupils still have big problems as they fail to perform well in the reading comprehension tests or exercises. This is supported by Umaiya and Low, (2019) who have discovered that a majority of Malaysian pupils would either leave comprehension questions without answers or merely copy chunks of text from the passage, showing no evidence of clear understanding and critical thinking. They have also identified that one of the contributing factors to this problem is pupils' lacking of vocabulary which results in their failure to interpret main ideas and identify important key points in the text read.

For the composition or writing part (English Paper 2), pupils are tested in three major components; text completion in which they have to fill in blanks with suitable words, information transfer that requires them to use the given notes or details to write a formatted essay in the form of a letter, email, message, memo, or notice, and finally a descriptive essay that talks about an event or incident. All these three sections entail a deep understanding of texts as well as the use of huge vocabulary for pupils to be able to proficiently present their ideas in an organised and structured manner. The vital role of vocabulary in determining writing quality has been acknowledged by many





researchers (Halipah & Muhammad Kamarul, 2020; Hiew, 2012; Laufer & Nation, 1995; Schmitt, 2008). When pupils use a wide range of vocabulary in their writing, it also dramatically enhances the text, allowing the readers to feel and really understand it in great detail. Halipah and Muhammad Kamarul (2020) as well as Hiew (2012) have found that many Malaysian learners are having problems in writing particularly due to their poor vocabulary. These learners found it difficult to express their ideas and thought even though some of them could understand the task requirement.

Despite the abolishment of the UPSR starting in 2021 as announced by the Ministry of Education, the teaching of English subject still continuously needs to be properly shaped given its status as the second language in Malaysia. Moreover, a study by Wang and Hamidah (2019) has indicated that our pupils have not acquired the desired vocabulary size and are yet to master the English vocabulary as set by the Malaysia Standard-Based Curriculum English syllabus, evident in their respondents' vocabulary knowledge that ranges from poor to intermediate levels. The result concurs with the finding made by Nor Ashikin et al. (2017) which stated that Malaysian students have weak language skills with low (productive) to average (receptive) levels of vocabulary, urging for the implementation of suitable strategies for effective vocabulary acquisition.

Now, with the announcement of the new end of semester assessment for level 2 pupils, there is nothing that changes the importance of having rich vocabulary among pupils. With reference to the CEFR framework, pupils are expected to show their understanding of linear and non-linear texts which of course requires the fluency in English as well as extensive vocabulary knowledge. In addition to this critical issue,





Hiew (2012), has voiced out her concern on this matter when she found that despite being in the school system for eleven to thirteen years (6 years in primary school and between 5 – 7 years in secondary school) and learn English throughout the years, there is still a number of Malaysian students who are not able to master the language upon completing their secondary school. Some of the issues that she highlighted such as inability to understand and produce suitable utterances (listening and speaking skills), difficulties to understand texts read (reading skill), and difficulties to procure ideas as well as the tendency to directly translating sentences from mother tongue language (writing skills) all occur due to unfamiliarity with vast English vocabulary, resulting to low language proficiency.

Similar problems have been identified among the participants of this study whereby their low vocabulary knowledge has become an obstacle for them to learn English. This is noticeably traced as the pupils often find it difficult to comprehend texts read, resulting in them making blatant attempts when answering questions that require text comprehension. Sometimes, they simply leave some of the questions without answers, similar to one of the signs of comprehension problems found by Umaiya and Low (2019). It could also be seen in the pilot test conducted prior to carrying out this research whereby the mean was quite low ($M = 45$, $SD = 16.3$). As explained earlier, educational researchers have found a strong correlation between language acquisition and vocabulary knowledge among second language learners. In other words, pupils with more vocabulary would be able to understand and use a language better, and vice versa. However, many of the participants give excuses like not knowing the meaning of words and having very limited vocabulary as the factors





that lead to their inability to well-understand the text and failure to answer related questions.

To overcome this problem, it is important to use an effective and appropriate strategy or approach in developing pupils' vocabulary, thus helping them to comprehend the English language. One of the strategies that are often highlighted in vocabulary learning and development is semantic mapping (Johnson, et al., 1986; Low, 2019; Mah, 2011; Salman Sabbah, 2020; Widyaningrum, 2020), which employs the brainstorming technique encouraging pupils to generate words and ideas. It also serves as a visual and structured strategy for vocabulary development and knowledge expansion displayed in categories of related words (Buzan, 1990). However, the researcher has found that previous research typically only investigated the use of semantic mapping among students in secondary schools or higher learning institutions. This has incited the curiosity of the researcher as to know whether in the context of the Malaysian primary school, using a semantic mapping strategy would develop pupils' vocabulary learning. It is also hoped that the findings from this study could make a substantial contribution to this research area.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate how the use of semantic mapping helps in vocabulary learning among Year Four pupils in a Malaysian national primary school. Further examination of the phenomenon will be done to identify the level of interest that pupils have in the a strategy, their attitudes towards the benefits of semantic



mapping, as well as their attitudes towards the convenience of semantic mapping (Thaledon, 2020) which are very important in providing a detailed description of how semantic mapping helps pupils to develop their vocabulary learning.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

This study has two objectives:

1.5.1 To explore how semantic mapping helps in vocabulary learning among Year Four pupils.

1.5.2 To discover the Year Four pupils' views on the use of semantic mapping for vocabulary learning.

1.6 Research Questions

In order to find out how the use of semantic mapping helps to develop vocabulary learning among Year Four pupils, two research questions are therefore raised to guide the study:

1.6.1 How does semantic mapping help in vocabulary learning among Year Four pupils?

1.6.2 What are the Year Four pupils' views on the use of semantic mapping for vocabulary learning?



1.7 Research Hypotheses

As this study employs quasi-experimental research, a few hypotheses derived from the research questions are to be tested:

- 1.7.1 H₀ There is no significant difference between the pre- and post-tests scores.
- 1.7.2 H₁ There is a significant difference between the pre- and post-tests scores of the experimental group.
- 1.7.3 H₂ There is a significant difference between the pre- and post-tests scores of the control group.
- 1.7.4 H₃ There is a significant difference in the post-test scores between the experimental and control groups.



1.8 Conceptual Framework

This study is guided by the use of semantic mapping to develop vocabulary learning among Year Four pupils. The dependent variable is vocabulary learning whereas the independent variable is the semantic mapping strategy. Semantic mapping is a technique in which words and ideas are represented in a graphical concept. Unlike a mere graphic organiser, the use of semantic mapping is underpinned the schema theory which requires pupils to relate new knowledge to their prior knowledge (schemata) and identify important components between the two, which provides a better understanding of the new concepts learnt (Johnson et al., 1986; Khoii & Sharififar, 2013; Schewel, 1989). This process enables pupils to learn the meanings of new words or concepts for





the ones which are already known to them, thus, allowing them to see how these words or concepts are interconnected to each other.

The semantic mapping strategy also involves a brainstorming phase when pupils present their known words. Guided by Vygotsky's Cognitive Development Theory, this strategy optimise social interaction between pupils and their teacher as well as their peers, allowing them to share the different knowledge and background they bring from home. However, according to Mah (2011) it goes beyond that as, unlike the common unstructured brainstorming session in which pupils are free to generate and present their ideas, semantic mapping is more structured whereby the ideas are presented in categories and developed based on the relationships they have between one another. This encourages the learners to develop and expand their vocabulary knowledge.



According to Rupley et al. (1998), activities with a visual display of words that encourage pupils to compare and contrast new words to known words can be helpful in vocabulary learning. Similarly, Blachowicz and Fisher (2006) claimed that activities that provide visual aids and memory organisers to the pupils, while actively relating words to one another in a word-rich environment are known to be effective for vocabulary learning. These would ease information processing, storing, and recalling (Umaiya & Low, 2019) among the learners. Most importantly, all these features can be found in the implementation of semantic mapping.

Thus, it is important for pupils to utilise the strategy considering its beneficial features and feasibility in vocabulary learning. It is hypothesised that with the implementation of semantic mapping, pupils would have more opportunities to engage



with words and vocabulary especially during the brainstorming session while at the same work on their schemata to link their prior knowledge and new knowledge, leading to better understanding and memorisation of vocabulary.

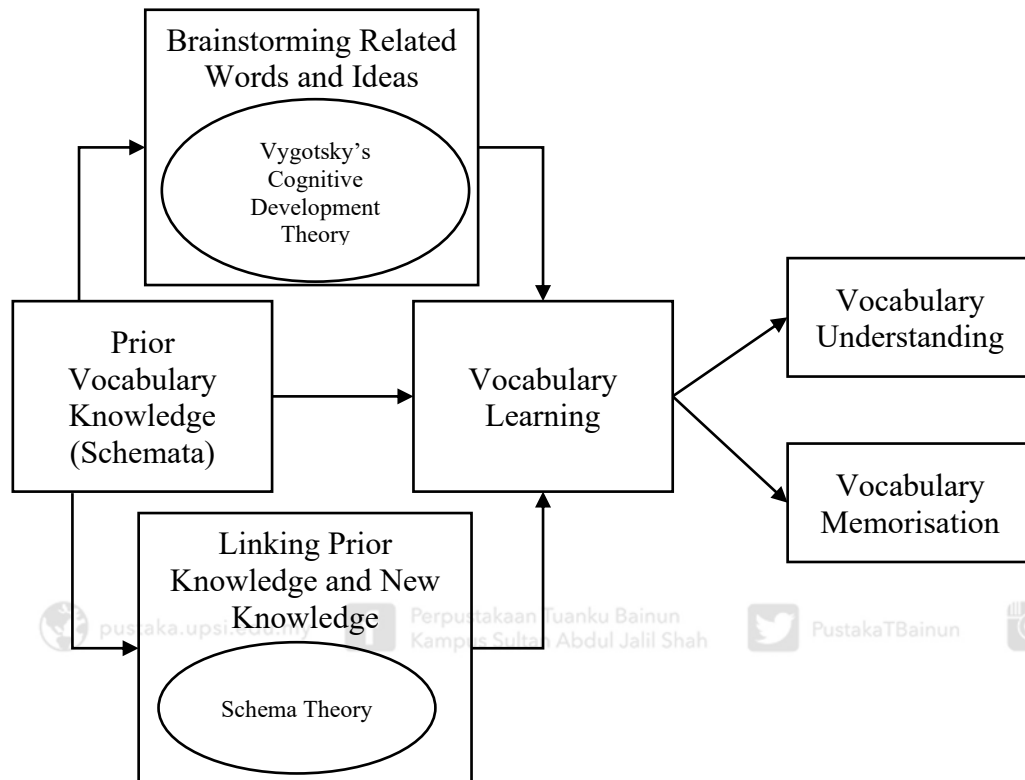


Figure 1.1. Conceptual Framework

1.9 Operational Definition

The operational definition is important as it helps to clarify the research topic and give clear and concise views of what are being focused on this study as outlined below:

1.9.1 CEFR

Common European Framework for References. This is an international standard for describing language ability on a six-point scale, from A1 for beginners, up to C2 for those who have mastered a language (MOE, 2018).

1.9.2 Incidental vocabulary learning

The type of vocabulary learning that occurs without being intended to. Instead, it is a by-product of learning other language skills (Barcroft, 2016). During the incidental vocabulary learning process, learners acquire new words and their meanings without explicit instructions or intentional effort. Often the learning process occurs naturally by when learners are engaged to activities such as reading books, watching movies and listening to songs or communication.

1.9.3 Intentional vocabulary learning

The type of vocabulary learning that occurs with proper planning and designated for the learners, consisting of explicit objectives of attaining the vocabulary knowledge (Barcroft, 2016). In contrast to the incidental learning, the intentional learning involves highly structured and planned effort of the learners to expand their vocabulary knowledge which usually ensued through activities like memorisation, repetition, and explicit instructions (Pavani et.al, 2019). In this present study, the intentional vocabulary learning could be seen through the implementation of semantic mapping



which is carefully planned and conducted with a lot of communication, brainstorming and discussion of lexical items.

1.9.4 Semantic mapping

A graphic organising strategy in which interrelated words are structured and organised to provide not only the relationships between words but the connection between what a learner has already known and new information learned (Johnson et al., 1986). For years, semantic mapping has been used to provide a visual representation that highlights the interrelatedness of concepts and aids in the comprehension of complex topics. In this study, semantic mapping is implemented as the intervention to pupils' vocabulary learning. Despite many guidelines proposed by researchers on how to do and use semantic mapping strategy, this study employs most general sequences for semantic mapping proposed by Johnson et al. (1986).

1.9.5 Develop

In general, 'develop' can be defined as to make something progressively grow (Nor Ashikin et. al, 2017). make something better than its previous state or condition (Thaledon, 2020). Often, it implies positive change and can involve various factors, such as learning, efforts or evolution depending on the specific context in which it is used. In this study, the researcher focuses on the use of semantic mapping as a strategy to develop the participants' vocabulary learning which is ensured by conducting pre-and post-vocabulary tests among the participants.



1.9.6 Vocabulary

Generally, the term ‘vocabulary’ refers to the set of words and terms used in a language (Barcroft, 2016). It encompasses the entire range of words a person can comprehend, pronounce, and utilize in both spoken and written communication. The target vocabulary that is highlighted and anticipated in this study is basically with reference to Malaysian Curriculum and Assessment Document Standard for Year Four pupils in national primary schools as well as Get Smart Plus 4 textbook.

1.9.7 Vocabulary knowledge

‘Vocabulary knowledge’ refers to a person's familiarity and understanding of words and phrases in a specific language; what words and phrases he or she knows.

Vocabulary knowledge is multi-faceted as it encompasses more than just recognizing words; it involves knowing words meanings, pronunciations, spellings, and how to use them appropriately in different contexts (Milton, 2009). It also includes passive vocabulary and understanding how words are used grammatically, syntactically, and pragmatically in conversations and written communication. However, the vocabulary knowledge of the pupils in this study are addressed and assessed based on their performance in the pre- and post-tests as well as their responses to the survey and interviews conducted.

1.9.8 Vocabulary learning

The process of knowing and understanding words or concepts which involves the growth of either receptive or expressive vocabulary knowledge (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2006). In this study, the pupils are considered to be learning the target vocabulary if they show an improvement in their post-test when compared to their pre-test. The researcher also assessed the pupils' vocabulary learning by conducting a survey and an interview in which pupils share more about their vocabulary learning experiences.

1.9.9 Vocabulary learning strategies

Vocabulary learning strategies includes specific techniques, methods, and approaches that individuals use to effectively getting to know, learn, understand, acquire and retain new words in a language; often adopted differently by the learners according to their levels, learning preferences, and types of intelligence (Nation, 1990). Cameron (2001), views vocabulary learning strategies as "actions that learners take to help themselves understand and remember vocabulary" (p. 92).

1.9.10 Views

"Views" refers to different perspectives, opinions, or ways of looking at a particular subject, situation, or concept. It represents the various angles from which something can be considered or understood. Views encompass the diverse interpretations, beliefs, or attitudes that individuals or groups may hold regarding a topic (Creswell & Plano



Clark, 2018). Since this study desires more than just test results to explore how semantic mapping helps in vocabulary learning among the participant, a survey and interviews are conducted in order to have more detailed descriptions of what the participants' think about the use of semantic mapping for their vocabulary learning.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

There are a few limitations to this research. Since the study employs a quasi-experimental approach, the result cannot be used to represent the whole population of Year Four pupils throughout the country and a larger sample size might result in different findings. This study takes four weeks of four consecutive days to conduct the assigned topic based on the yearly scheme of work provided by the Curriculum Development Division, MOE. This might be too limited a time for the pupils to fully adapt themselves to any newly proposed approach or strategy. Hence, a similar study with a different duration of time might provide different results. For more conclusive answers and findings on the validity of using semantic mapping for vocabulary learning, a longer period is needed to carry out the intervention. The qualitative data of the study are collected through interviews with three pupils from the experimental group; each representing their performance levels in the post-test (weak, average, good). Due to reticence, it is difficult to have more participants to involve in the interviews. Hence the views and perceptions of those interviewees do not represent the whole participants of the study. Other than that, factors like the socio-economic factors and exposure to English that the participants receive outside the school might as well

play a significant role in pupils' vocabulary knowledge. Therefore, the results of the study cannot be fully accountable for the use of semantic mapping only.

1.11 Significance of the Study

As this study aims at exploring how semantic mapping helps in vocabulary learning among Year Four pupils, it is significant in contributing to the underexplored research area related to the use of semantic mapping for vocabulary learning among primary school pupils. Results from the findings would provide empirical evidence of useful and effective vocabulary learning strategies for pupils, especially at the primary school level. It also promotes a friendly strategy to the teaching and learning of vocabulary among second language teachers and learners whereby pupils will be guided to collaboratively share their knowledge, information, and schemata to produce a wider range of vocabulary related to a topic learned.

Since this strategy is applied mainly as pre-lesson activity and post-lesson activity at certain times, the frequently repeated exposure to the vocabulary has enabled pupils to retain the vocabulary longer and better; contributing towards the development and enrichment of their vocabulary, resulting in advanced ESL acquisition. Last but not least, teachers would be benefited due to the exposure to a more feasible strategy to practise in the teaching of vocabulary.

1.12 Summary

This chapter gives a general overview of the study. It provides the background of the study, the statement of the problem, purpose of study, research objectives, research questions, and research hypothesis. After that, the theoretical and conceptual framework underpins the study is also presented. The chapter ends with the definition of related terms, limitations of the study, as well as the significance of the research. In the next chapter, the researcher will provide more information about theories related to the study, vocabulary learning especially in primary schools, the use of semantic mapping, reviews on the previous studies as well as the literature gap.