



AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN LEARNING VOCABULARY

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ABSTRACT

Vocabulary is an essential building block of language and as such it makes sense to be able to measure learners' knowledge of it. The objectives of the research was to know the difficulties faced by students in learning vocabulary and what the factors that cause students' difficulties in learning vocabulary. The number of participants who selected by the writer are 10 eighth grade students of SMP Pesona Dywantara using purposive sampling. The research design used in this research was descriptive qualitative because this research results the descriptive data in the form of written or picture data from the subjects of the research being observed. Based on the data analysis, the writer found three difficulties faced by students. Those are; spelling and pronunciation, words meaning and using words appropriately. Furthermore, the difficulties caused by many factors. Such as, related to their frequency of study, unfamiliar with English vocabulary and limitation of their vocabulary.

Keywords: *students, difficulties, vocabulary.*

Introduction

The English is international language which is used by many people in the world. Therefore, mastery of English is increasingly important in this era. There are some skills and language components in English. Skills of English are speaking, reading, writing and listening. Meanwhile, Language components of English are vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and spelling. Between skills and language components are supported each other, they cannot be separated each other.

Vocabulary contained in oral form such as those used in listening and speaking or the can come in print form such as those words that we recognize and use in reading and writing. It can conclude that without learning the vocabulary especially in the second or foreign language, of course will hard to communicate well in spoken or written form. Vocabulary is the entire words that make up a language. Before someone studies about the English skill, he should learn about vocabulary as the first step. As we know, students read the words in reading, they speak words in speaking, then listen words in listening, and use words in writing. In addition, Wilkins in Thornbury as cited in Sahar stated that without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.

In conclusion, learning vocabulary seems to be one of the easiest things about learning a foreign language, but it was one of the hardest things to do. Because, learning vocabulary is not only learn about the meaning of word. Moreover, vocabulary is one of important component for students because they cannot speak English well if they have limited vocabulary. The more words students can master, the more it will affect their success in learning a language. Because, students will be better to showing their abilities if they have more vocabularies.

Vocabulary is very vital in learning a foreign language. In Junior High level it is very important to continue introduce English, especially Vocabulary. But, in learning vocabulary is not easy for students in Indonesia where English is a foreign language and not used in daily communication. So, it was made the vocabulary learning process more difficult. Like the writer experienced in Internship 3 last year. Learning English, especially vocabulary is still quite difficult for the students. The difficulties of became a problem in learning process. Rohmatillah in his research stated, in line with learning English vocabulary, English vocabulary is different from Indonesian viewed from form, including pronunciation and spelling, meaning and the word use.

Research Methods

The research took place at SMP Pesona Dywantara that is located on Jl. Nasional No. 11 37 Desa Sibanteng Kecamatan Leuwisadeng Kabupaten Bogor. The subject of the research was the students in eighth grade of SMP Pesona Dywantara. This research used qualitative research as research design. The objective of the qualitative methodology is to produce in-depth and illustrative information in order to understand the various dimensions of the problem under analysis. Qualitative research seeks to understand the ways people experience events, places, and processes differently as part of a fluid reality, a reality

constructed through multiple interpretations and filtered through multiple frames of reference and systems of meaning making. In this qualitative research, the writer used test item, interview and questionnaire as instrument. The writer distributed test item and questionnaire to some students in eighth grade junior high school as the participants and interview students to dig deeper information about students' difficulties in vocabulary.

Data analysis is the process used to answer your research questions. Miles, Huberman & Saldana as cited in Hiratsuka stated that today qualitative data analysis seems to remain a somewhat mysterious and elusive process for newcomers to the field. The data analysis in this study included several steps or stages; coding, data reduction, data display, and making conclusions.

Finding and Discussion

Finding

1. The Result of Test Item

Data that presented here was data from test item that were spreading to 10 eighth grade students in SMP Pesona Dywantara about students' difficulties in learning vocabulary. This Item test consists of 25 questions in the form of multiple choices.

From the result of test item, the writer found that from 10 eighth grade participants at SMP Pesona Dywantara, there were 5 participants (50%) were categorized as poor, and 5 participants (50%) were categorized as very poor. Based on the result of the test item, it was found that from 10 participants the minimum score is 16 and maximum score is 56, and the mean is 40. In conclusion, the results of this test item indicate that the participants' vocabulary skills are still low. Reflecting on the test item results, this research was conducted to find out the problems and difficulties experienced by participants, so that their vocabulary skills were so low.

2. The Result of Questionnaire

The questionnaire contains 8 questions that have answered by participants. Based on the result of questionnaire of number 1, it described that that most of participants (90%) have difficulty in learning English vocabulary and some small part of participants stated no (10%). Thus it can be concluded if they have difficulty in learning English vocabulary.

In result number 2, it shows more than half portion of participants (70%) stated they have difficulty in learning vocabulary caused by differences between the written word and the pronunciation and there were (30%) participants that stated no. So it can be concluded they have difficulty in learning vocabulary caused by differences between the written word and the pronunciation.

Meanwhile, result number 3 indicates more than half portion of participants (70%) stated that their difficulty in learning vocabulary related to terms of synonyms and there were (30%) participants stated no. Thus it can be concluded their difficulty in learning vocabulary related to terms of synonyms.

Then, result number 4 indicates that a half of participants (50%) stated their difficulty in learning vocabulary related to terms of antonyms and also a half of participants stated no (50%). Thus it can be concluded that a half of participants

stated yes that their difficulty in learning vocabulary related to terms of antonyms meanwhile a half of participants stated no about it.

Furthermore, result number 5 shows most of participants (80%) had difficulty in learning vocabulary caused by some words are similar in form but different in meaning and some small part of students stated no (20%). Thus it can be concluded they have difficulty in learning vocabulary caused by some words are similar in form but different in meaning

However, result number 6 shows more than half portion of participants (60%) stated their difficulty in learning vocabulary caused by they are afraid of making mistake in producing certain word. But there were also a half of participants (40%) stated no. Thus it can be concluded more than a half participants difficulty in learning vocabulary caused by they are afraid of making mistake in producing certain word.

The next in result number 7, it indicates most of participants (90%) did not practice the vocabulary in their daily communication or written practices and some small part of participants stated yes (10%). Thus it can be concluded if they did not practice the vocabulary in their daily communication or written practices.

The last in result number 8, it indicates that a half of participants (50%) stated they forget easily the vocabulary had learned and also a half of participants stated no (50%). Thus it can be concluded that a half of participants stated yes that they forget easily the vocabulary had learned meanwhile a half of students stated no about it.

In conclusion, the majority of participants said it was difficult to learning vocabulary. Then the writer divided the difficulties and factors cause difficulties in learning vocabulary into three parts. Pronunciation and spelling, word meaning and students' behavior. They felt difficult because the differences between the written word and the pronunciation (70%). They felt difficult because the words are similar in form but different in meaning (80%). In word meaning, most on average all participants (70 %) felt difficult in synonym and (50%) in antonym. Meanwhile, the cause factors are they afraid making mistake in producing certain word (50%) and never practice the vocabulary in daily communication or written practices (90%).

3. The Result of Interview

The writer interviewed 10 eight grade participants in SMP Pesona Dywantara Leuwisadeng. This interview conducted to get deeper information on analysis of students' difficulties in learning vocabulary. The writer gave 6 questions to each participant.

Based on the result of the interview to 10 participants in eighth grade, the writer concluded that mostly they have difficulty in learning vocabulary with some reasons. This idea was supported by P2, he stated "Yes, I feel unfamiliar with English vocabulary". The other responses also stated from P3, he stated "Yes, because many words are similar but have different meanings.". Then from P4, she stated "Yes, because I do not know what it means".

Then, they have difficulties when using vocabulary for other English skills, such as in writing and speaking. It can be known from their answer on the

interview by P6, she stated "Yes, in writing, I confused whether the vocabulary used is correct or not". The other responses also stated from P10, he stated "Yes, in speaking, because my vocabulary is limited and the pronunciation is difficult".

Meanwhile, they also have difficulties in pronunciation and spelling English vocabulary. This idea was supported by P6, she stated "It is difficult, because many words are pronounced and spelled differently" Then from P5, she stated "Yes, it is also difficult". Although there are also some students who stated is not too difficult because they can see a dictionary or use Google.

Next, they have difficulties in understand the meaning of English vocabulary. This idea was supported by P4, she stated "It is difficult, because there are many meanings of the vocabulary that I do not know". The other responses also stated from P7, she stated "Quite difficult if the vocabulary is unfamiliar".

The last is they gave some factors cause their difficulties in learning vocabulary. Such as because English vocabulary is unfamiliar and they did not use English vocabulary in their daily communication or written practices. It can be known from their answer on the interview by P2, he stated "Because I feel unfamiliar with English vocabulary". The other responses from P7, she stated "Because English vocabulary is unfamiliar and not very interested in English and rarely to practiced.". Then from P8, she stated "Because English vocabulary is unfamiliar and not very interested in English and rarely to practiced".

Based on the information above, it can be concluded in learning vocabulary students have difficulties in spelling and pronunciation, and meaning of word. Meanwhile, factors that cause students' difficulties in learning vocabulary are students unfamiliar with English vocabulary and rarely learn English at home.

Discussion

This is the results and research findings related to the discussion of students' difficulties in learning vocabulary". The results of the study were obtained based on test item, questionnaires and interview. On the other hand, the results and findings also to answer the research questions in this study.

1. What are the difficulties faced by students in learning vocabulary?

A. Pronunciation and Spelling

The first difficulties faced by students in learning vocabulary are pronunciation and spelling. This idea was supported by the result of test item, questionnaire and interview. Based on result of questionnaire, they felt difficult because the differences between the written word and the pronunciation (70%). And They felt difficult because the words are similar in form but different in meaning (80%). It is line with the result of interview from P6, she stated "It is difficult, because many words are pronounced and spelled differently". Then, from P5 she stated "Yes, it is also difficult".

According to Thornbury as cited in Sumarnov, potentially difficult words will typically be those that contain sounds that are unfamiliar to some groups of learners.[Thornbury as cited in Sardor Surmanov & Maftuna Azimov, Op. Cit. p. 147] To have a good vocabulary someone has to have good pronunciation of the word. It becomes their difficulties because the spelling of Bahasa and English are different.

B. Word Meaning

The second difficulties faced by students in learning vocabulary are pronunciation and spelling. This idea was supported by the result of test item, questionnaire and interview. Based on result of questionnaire, factor cause word meaning in difficulties vocabulary because they are difficult in terms of synonym (70 %) and felt difficult in antonym (50%). It is line with the result of interview from P4, she stated “It is difficult, because there are many meanings of the vocabulary that I don not know”. The other responses also stated from P7, she stated “Quite difficult if the vocabulary is unfamiliar”.

According to Thornbury as cited in Sumarnov, when two words overlap in meaning, learners are likely to confuse them. Words with multiple meanings can also be troublesome for learners.

2. What are the factors that cause students' difficulties in learning vocabulary?

The factors that cause students' difficulties in learning vocabulary are based on students' behavior and their ability. This idea was supported by the result of test item, questionnaire and interview.

Based on result of questionnaire, they afraid making mistake in producing certain word (50%). And never practice the vocabulary in daily communication or written practices (90%). It is line with the result of interview from P8, she stated “Because I do not learn English vocabulary at home”. Then from P5, she stated “Yes, because I feel unfamiliar with English vocabulary”. Furthermore, from P2, he stated “Yes, in writing and speaking due to limited vocabulary”.

Edriz as cited in Bimas Reskiawan stated the factor cause difficulties vocabulary mastery is little speaking and writing that make students forget words quickly. In a word, participants cannot learn words well, because they had some bad habits in studied vocabulary.

Conclusion

Based on the result of test item, questionnaire and interview with the ten participants of the eight grade students of SMP Pesona Dywantara, the difficulties that they faced such as, in the aspect of spelling and pronunciation there were differences between the written word and the pronunciation. Other than that, in the aspect of meaning they found difficulties because the words are similar in form but different in meaning and they were difficult in terms of synonym and antonym. Meanwhile, the writer also concluded factors that cause students' difficulties in learning vocabulary related to their frequency of study, unfamiliar with English vocabulary and limitation of their vocabulary.

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