

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter concerns the whole of the points that were used to collect the data about students' difficulties in learning English vocabulary. It concludes into two categories. They are previous studies and theoretical reviews. The previous studies discuss the development of the research in the past. The theoretical review explains the theories that are related to this current study.

#### **2.1 Previous Studies**

This section discusses the theories that are related to discover the importance of learning vocabulary, the common factors of difficulty in learning vocabulary, and the techniques to solve the problem in learning the vocabulary. There were four theories explained in this section.

The first study conducted by Altyari (2017) showed that the Saudi students' weak linguistic performance in English reflects their deficient vocabulary knowledge. The participants included thirty-five students from different educational levels and nine male Saudi teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) at intermediate and secondary schools. The results reveal that students-participants ineffectively used vocabulary strategies such as by mainly relying on a bilingual dictionary, asking others to know the meanings, and so on. It can be concluded that deficient vocabulary depends on the teaching and learning vocabulary process.

Meanwhile, Farjami and Aidinlou (2013) argued that learning a foreign or second language at various levels of proficiency requires a high number of words for which the learners make efforts to retain words in their long-term memory. This research also elaborates the students' problems in learning English vocabulary and the technique to solve these problems. However, it places more stress on the long-term vocabulary techniques than the short-term ones. It can be concluded that learning English vocabulary should present new vocabulary items in contexts, which are rich enough and provide the learners' clues to guess the meanings to improve their vocabulary knowledge.

Furturemore, Rohmatillah (2017) investigated the difficulties faced by students in learning English vocabulary. It can be concluded that there were some important factors of difficulty in learning the vocabulary and attributes learning difficulties to various levels of language. To cite, pronunciation difficulties are related to the sound system of English, inflections and word forms are related to the morphological system, word associations, such as collocations, and phrasal verbs are related to semantics, the word categories relevant to syntax, and so on.

Moreover, Khan (2011) also pointed out the vocabulary areas in which the Saudi target language learners face difficulties. These areas include learning the vocabulary meanings, spelling, using synonyms, prefixes, and suffixes.

I can conclude the first previous studies indicated that deficient vocabulary knowledge was caused by vocabulary strategies such as relying on a bilingual dictionary and asking others to know the meanings. The second previous studies showed that the technique to learn vocabulary was to guess the meaning of new words in the context. In addition, the third previous studies, the students' factors of difficulties were the sound system of English, morphological system, and syntax. Besides, the fourth previous studies showed that students were difficulties in vocabulary meanings, spelling, using synonyms, prefixes, and suffixes.

In conclusion, the majority of students have difficulties in learning English vocabulary. Concerning the previous research, I would analyze the students' difficulties in vocabulary mastery faced by Thai learners in Semarang. On the other hand, this research was sent Google form 20 items to explain the importance of vocabulary learning and the factors of difficulty in learning English vocabulary by using a questionnaire. Besides, this research also used interview 12 respondents from four universities in Semarang to figure out the techniques to solve the problems in learning English vocabulary.

## **2.2 Theoretical Review**

This part discusses more all things related to "Students' difficulties in learning English vocabulary of Thai learners in Semarang." I desire to gain information from the document and the study of basic theory as follows:

### **2.2.1 Vocabulary**

There are some definitions of vocabulary according to some experts. Linse (2005) states vocabulary is the collection of words that an individual knows. Another expert, Neuman, & Dawyer (2011) say that vocabulary can be defined as the words someone must know to communicate effectively: words in speaking (expressive vocabulary) and words in listening (receptive vocabulary).

Moreover, vocabulary is the material to learn by students from all levels of the school must study if they want to master English successfully. It is impossible to succeed in learning languages without mastering vocabulary. In addition to Wulanjani (2016) states vocabulary learning and teaching should be combined into the four skills in English. The vocabulary contains in the print form, such as reading and writing, and in the oral form, such as listening or speaking (Alizadeh, 2016). By statement above, it presents that vocabulary influences a variety of skills when learning a new language.

According to the definition above, I conclude the vocabulary can improve all sections of communication, reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Therefore, the vocabulary learning process is unavoidable. Learners need to know and comprehend vocabulary first before getting into the English lesson seriously.

### **2.2.2 The importance of vocabulary**

Basically, according to Megawati (2016) English has three additional abilities, namely Grammar, Vocabulary, and Pronunciation, all of these components

are very important for improving optimal English language skills. In addition, Bhakti & Marwanto (2018) state vocabulary is central to language and of critical importance to typical language learning. Vocabulary knowledge is a critical tool for second language learners. Nation (2001) further describes the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and language use as a compliment that knowledge of vocabulary enables language use and conversely, language use leads to increase vocabulary knowledge.

Moreover, Laufer (1997) states that “learning vocabulary is the most important elements without which neither comprehension nor production of language is possible as cited in Indriati, 2014. In another word, vocabulary cannot be separated from other language skills.” As [Paul Nation](#) (2015) notes in [his paper on vocabulary learning](#) “Vocabulary is not an end in itself”. A rich vocabulary makes the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing easier to perform.”

In the trend of globalization, the internationalization of language is unavoidable. English undoubtedly plays the most important role. It includes three elements are pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Those are cannot separate from the foreign language learning process.

### **2.2.3 The kinds of vocabulary**

Hatch and Brown (1995) indicate there are two kinds of vocabulary those are:

- a. Receptive vocabulary is words that learners recognize and understand when used in context, but they cannot produce. It is a vocabulary that learners recognize when they see or meet in reading text but do not use in speaking and writing. Based on

the text above shows receptive vocabulary is talking about someone who can accept something by seeing and listening, but they cannot propagate to another person by communication (using oral sounds) and writing (using the text to propagate it).

- b. Productive vocabulary is the words learners can understand and pronounce correctly and use constructively in speaking and writing. Therefore, productive vocabulary can be addressed as an active process. The learners can produce the words to express their thoughts to others. This text shows that productive vocabulary is talking about the comprehension of the language and can express by speaking out to another person. This kind of vocabulary is the active kind to help learners can speak English, although this language is a foreign language or a second language.

#### **2.2.4 Vocabulary learning for foreign language learners**

Vocabulary learning is an important aspect of foreign language learning because the meanings of new words are frequently stressed, whether in books or classes. Furthermore, vocabulary is crucial for language learning because it supports all other language abilities, can be used as a stepping stone to more advanced language use, and can assist students in achieving fluency more quickly. Besides, vocabulary learning is the basis of language and without vocabulary, one cannot learn any language; it is the knowledge of words.

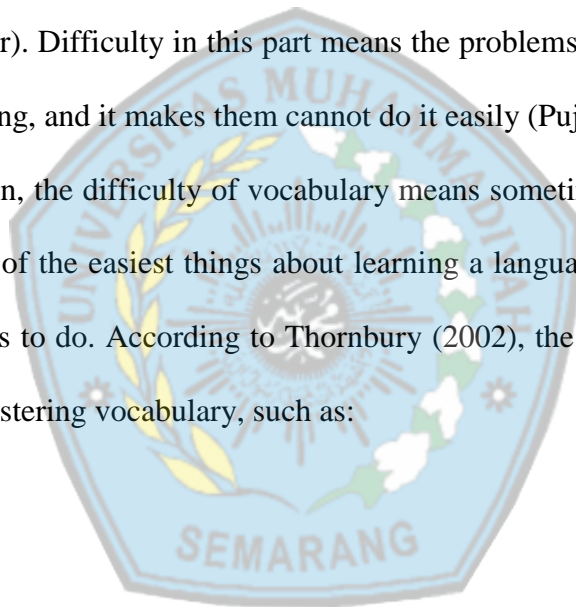
Accordingly, Min and Hsu (2010) state vocabulary learning is closely related to foreign languages. In the foreign language learning process, the readers need to understand most of the vocabulary and the contextual meanings used in the passage.

### **2.2.5 Students' Difficulties in Vocabulary Mastery**

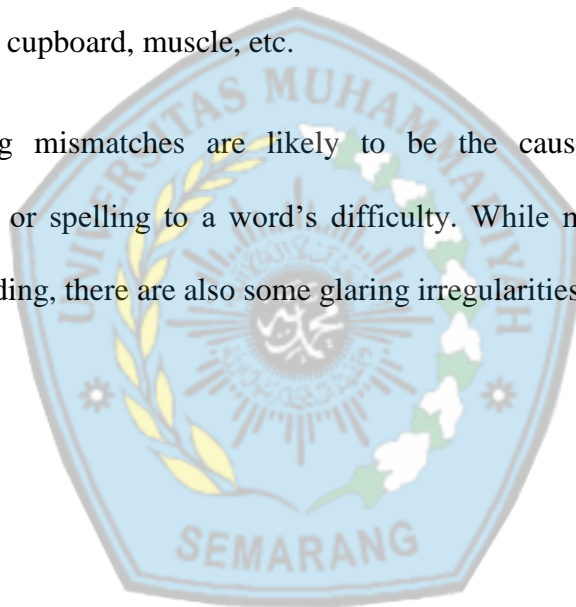
#### *2.2.5.1 Definition*

The difficulty means quality or state of being hard to do or understand (Mariam-Webster). Difficulty in this part means the problems that students encounter in doing something, and it makes them cannot do it easily (Pujiana, 2016).

In addition, the difficulty of vocabulary means sometimes earning vocabulary seems to be one of the easiest things about learning a language, but it is also one of the hardest things to do. According to Thornbury (2002), the students can face some difficulties in mastering vocabulary, such as:



- a. Pronunciation means the words that are difficult to pronounce are more difficult to learn. It means the word that learners are unfamiliar to learn and listen to
- b. Sound-spelling mismatches are likely to be the cause of errors, either of pronunciation or spelling to a word's difficulty. While most English spelling is fairly law-abiding, there are also some glaring irregularities. Words that contain silent letters are particularly problematic: foreign, listen, headache, climbing, bored, honest, cupboard, muscle, etc.
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- d. Length and complexity seem to be no more difficult to learn than short ones. But, as a rule of thumb, high-frequency words tend to be short in English, and therefore the learner is likely to meet them more often, a factor favoring their “learnability”.
- e. Grammar is the grammar associated with the word. Remembering whether a verb like enjoy, love, or hope is followed by an infinitive (to swim) or an –ing form (swimming) can add to its difficulty.
- f. Meaning it means learners are likely to confuse them in the sentences. For example make and do are a case in point: you make breakfast and make an appointment, but you do the housework and do a questionnaire.
- g. Range, connotation, and idiomatic are the words that can be used in a wide range of contexts will generally be perceived as easier than their synonyms with a narrower range. Thus, put in a very wide-ranging verb, compared to impose, place, position, etc. Likewise, thin is a safer bet than skinny, slim, slender.

Uncertainty as to the connotations of some words may cause problems too. Thus, propaganda has negative connotations in English, but its equivalent may simply mean publicity. On the other hand, eccentric have not negative connotations in English, but its nearest equivalent in other languages may be deviant.

Finally, words or expressions that are idiomatic (like make up your mind, keep an eye on....) will generally be more difficult than words whose meaning is transparent (decide, watch).

Based on the explanation above shows there are many difficulties in learning English vocabulary although they have learned English from the secondary school until university, they also still have difficulty.

#### *2.2.5.2 Some factors cause students' difficulties in vocabulary mastery*

Many different factors contribute to the cause of students' difficulties in vocabulary mastery. Many factors contribute to the cause of students' difficulties in vocabulary mastery. Huyen and Nga (2003) identify that four factors are cause problems in mastering vocabulary. First, most students consider the teacher's explanation for meaning or definition, pronunciation, spelling, and grammatical function boring. Second, students only think of vocabulary learning as knowing the primary meaning of new words. Therefore, they ignore all functions of the words. Third, students only acquire new vocabulary through new words in their textbooks or when they have been given by teachers during classroom lessons. Forth, many learners do not want to take risks in applying what they have learned. Students recognize a word in a written or spoken form and think that they have "known the word", but they may not be able to use the word properly in different contexts or pronounce it correctly.

Learning success is influenced by several factors, which are classified into internal and external factors and internal factors are factors that exist in individuals who are learning, including physical factors, psychological factors. Whereas external factors are factors that are beyond the individual, including family factors, school factors, and community factors (Slameto, 2010). Based on the description mentioned the factors that influence learning achievement, namely learning method, teaching method role, and the environment is as a tool to create teaching and learning process.

According to Ningrum (2015), there are some problems in mastering vocabulary, such as 1) Students do not know using the structure of the words in learning vocabulary. It is like prefixation, suffixation, and root is the three parts of vocabulary, 2) Students feel vocabulary is difficult. They cannot learn new words and learn English well. On the other hand, they have less time to read another English book, 3) A little in speaking and writing make students forget the words quickly, and 4) In a word, students cannot learn words well, because they have some bad habits to study vocabulary. They only know one meaning of the word. When they see the same word in a different context, they do not know its meaning.

Moreover, Rahmatillah (2015) states that some factors cause students' difficulties in learning vocabulary (1) the differentiate form in written and spoken in English., (2) the number of words is exceedingly large, (3) the limitations of sources of information about words, (4) the complexity of word knowledge, (5) lack of understanding of grammatical of the words, (6) the incorrect pronunciation. Besides, this is in line with the statement of Suherman & Yustiana (2017) which state that with

the many factors involved in the learning process, not all individuals have the ability to overcome problems related to learning activities.

### **2.2.6 Students problems in learning vocabulary**

There are some problems when students learn vocabulary. According to Rahmawati (2012), learning vocabulary need to spend time practicing it in daily life, it is a problem. The study is from Wulandari (2020) the one of English teachers in SMP Wahid Hasyim Malang stated that the problem has not enough for the English teacher to teach vocabulary to the students and students also lack motivation in learning vocabulary. It happens when some researcher asks one of the English teachers in SMP Wahid Hasyim Malang, about the student's difficulties in learning English. Moreover, Khajloo (2013) states that there are some deficiencies in learning English subjects in the school, such as the low hours of English language teaching, the lack of students' interest, students' motivation in learning English, and the lack of concentration in the class.

### **2.2.7 The technique in learning English vocabulary**

A technique is a method of doing some task or performing something to achieve the goal. According to Nie and Zhou (2017), learning strategies are the learners' techniques, approaches, tactics, or specific behaviors that aim to make their learning more effective. In this section, there are many techniques in learning vocabulary for foreign language learners. Many studies have been widely carried focusing on investigating vocabulary teaching and vocabulary learning strategies.

Applying implicit and explicit vocabulary teaching strategies, according to Al-Darayseh (2014), the impact of a combination of both vocabulary teaching strategies on developing EFL learners' vocabulary size and their reading whose findings revealed that the combination of explicit and implicit vocabulary strategies has proved to be effective in increasing students' vocabulary size and their reading skill.

Besides, Zarin and Khan (2014) investigate vocabulary learning strategies among undergraduate learners revealed that memory strategy was found as the most frequently used strategy whereas metacognitive strategy was the least frequently one.

