

AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS DIFFICULTIES IN MASTERING VOCABULARY

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Abstract

Vocabulary is one of important things that we have to learn, especially if we are studying English. From vocabulary we can speak and write and others. But if we have a low vocabulary, it will impact on those four aspects. With the low ability of vocabulary students, the students become difficult to communicate with friends or teacher. Besides that, the writing of vocabulary and spoken English is different. It makes the student confused. The aim of research is to know the difficulties faced by the students of seventh grades in mastering vocabulary and to find out the factors that influence difficulties in mastering vocabulary of seventh grade students. The researcher was taken from observation, interview and also documentation. The finding describes that the difficulties faced by the students in mastering vocabulary are the most of students have difficulties in pronunciation, how to spell, how to understand the meaning of words, and the low motivation of the students. Moreover, the factors that can influence the students in mastering vocabulary are the lack of students practicing in vocabulary pronunciation; the students are less use the dictionaries, and the lack of time for English lesson. So, the conclusion from the research based on the difficulties experienced by students are difficulties in the pronunciation of vocabulary and spelling the word because students are lazy to practice pronunciation because they feel afraid when they are wrong in pronunciation and spelling. In addition, students do not understand the meaning of vocabulary that keeps students silent during the lesson. And also low students motivation can also influence students' difficulties in understanding vocabulary which is caused by internal and external factors of students. Besides that the factors that can influence the students in mastering vocabulary are the lack of students practicing in vocabulary pronunciation; the students are less use the dictionaries, and the lack of time for English learning.

Keywords : Vocabulary; Students difficulty; Vocabulary Mastery; Case Study; Junior High School.

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is one of important things that we have to learn, especially if we are studying English. From vocabulary we can speak, write and others. But if we have a low vocabulary, it will impact on those four aspects. Meanwhile, if we have more vocabulary we can speak, read, listen and write as we want. The writing of vocabulary and spoken

English is different. It makes the student confused. (Fraser, 2000a, p.7) argues that "with good pronunciation, a speaker is intelligible despite other errors. With poor pronunciation, understanding a speaker will be very difficult, despite accuracy in other areas.

In this study, the researcher wants to know the student difficulties in mastering vocabulary and also the

factor that can influence the student in mastering vocabulary. According to Anova et al. (2009) vocabulary is a total number of words that we use in the language, every word we produce to be a sentence. Meanwhile, The Oxford Dictionary (2002) defines that vocabulary as the body of words used in a particular language or in a particular sphere. The purpose of the particular sphere is a word group consisting of the type of a name such as the name of the jobs and the meaning. Marzuki (2015) defines that mastery is comprehension about all of the knowledge. Mastery is the knowing and understanding everything about knowledge.

To guide the exploration, we posed the following questions :

1.) What are the difficulties faced by the students of seventh grades of SMPN 2 Padangan in mastering vocabulary? 2.) What do the factors in influence difficulties in mastering vocabulary of seventh grades student of SMPN 2 Padangan?.

The benefits of the study for the teacher is expected to change the teacher's toward teaching better in mastering vocabulary. And also for the students is to make the students more active to try pronouncing of vocabulary and improve their ability in mastering vocabulary. For the researcher is can be used to know the difficulties of students in mastering vocabulary and to find the best strategies for student difficulties in mastering vocabulary.

METHOD

This data was taken from observation, interview and documentation. This study is a

qualitative case study, which aimed to analyze students difficulties in mastering vocabulary.

The subject of this study was the student of seventh grade consist of 5 class there are 7A, 7B, 7C,7D, 7E of SMPN 2 PADANGAN in academic year 2017. Total of the student of seventh grade is 128. But, the researcher only use the samples in 7C class while total of the students are 28 . The researcher take this class because the teacher English said that this class has a problem in vocabulary and low motivation to study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Difficulties Faced By the Students in Mastering Vocabulary

The data are taken from observation and interview technique.

First, based on the interview and the observation the students faced the difficulties in mastering vocabulary. The students found difficult because they are unable to properly pronounce vocabulary. During learning when students are asked to imitate some of the vocabularies that the teacher has given, students experience constraints which must be repeated several times for correct pronunciation. Based on the result of observations of the students during the lesson in point 4. About the students' are able to feel the vocabulary spoken by the teacher is included in the range of score 2 it means that the students are weak in terms of imitating pronunciation.

Besides that, the difference between spoken and written in English is also a difficult thing for

students. For example, when the students pronounce the word “driver”, “journalist”, “listen”, “write”, and “honest”. According to statements with several students who were sampled it was a difficulty experienced by all students. ND said "I think the pronunciation method is very difficult because I am not used to speaking English. Therefore, I am lazy to learn English, for example, I say 'listen' just as I read Indonesian”.

Second, the students' problem in mastering vocabulary is writing the words or sounds-spelling mismatches. This writing and spelling of vocabulary are very difficult for students because most of the students say that they cannot spell the alphabet correctly. The written form is different from the spoken form in English. When the students want to write a word “driver”, they just write the word that they heard “draiver”. AS said, "To spell the alphabet I am still weak and can't even spell a word I still stutter". Moreover, MT also said that spelling the word in English was very difficult because I couldn't read it.

Third, the student confused about how to understand the meaning of words. Many students faced with the difficulties when the learning processes like the teacher speaking English to explain the material. For example, when the teacher tries to invite students to discuss the material taught "today we learn about the types of professions and also what they do." The students just understand some word or the student cannot understand the material. Based on the observation sheet, at point 5 about the students understanding on the vocabulary used by the teacher got a score of 2

which many students did not understand about the vocabulary spoken by the teacher during the lesson. The last is low motivation from the students. There are many students in this school need a lot of motivation so they can improve their ability in mastering vocabulary. Based on the observation, as a result of lack of motivation to the students i.e. the students did not do the homework, the students are more passive during the lesson, the students are not confident so the students are silent when asked by the teacher. So, students in this class have low motivation which is caused by external factors and also internal factors which cause students to be more passive during lessons and get low grades. Based on the explanation above, this study revealed that problems or difficulties faced by the students in vocabulary learning were various. The difficulties faced by the students were almost all of the students have difficulties in pronouncing the words, how to write and spell, how to the meaning of the word, and low students motivation.

2. Factors Influencing the Students Difficulties in Mastering Vocabulary

In the observation data, the writer assessed that the factors in influence students' difficulties were the lack of students practicing in vocabulary pronunciation. It was proven during the learning process that teachers practice some vocabulary which must be repeated.

Besides that, the low students interested in English language lessons can also trigger students to have difficulty in mastering vocabulary. One of the students named LK said that I don't like

English because it's difficult and confusing. That caused students to be lazy to practice correct vocabulary pronunciation and also students become easy to forget in remembering vocabulary.

The ability to remembering vocabulary of the students into the factors that make has students difficult in mastering vocabulary. The students feel that remembering new vocabulary is very difficult. When students find new vocabulary, they are very enthusiastic about the vocabulary. But when the lesson is finished students easily forget the vocabulary they have learned. Based on the observation, after the lesson is over, the researcher tries to ask some students about some of the vocabularies that have been taught. And as a result, students find it difficult to remember the vocabulary

In other hands, the factors that can affect students' difficulty in mastering vocabulary were lack of utilizing dictionary media. Many students from class 7c did not carry dictionaries during the lesson. Moreover, students have no initiative to borrow dictionaries in the library or ask the teacher if they find a difficult vocabulary. This resulted in many students who did not know the meaning of the material delivered by the teacher.

From the observation, in points 9 about the students' use dictionaries when searching for the meaning of vocabulary students get a score of 2 it means students are weak or lacking in the use of dictionary media too. The students reason because they don't have the dictionaries or miss at home. So that students choose to be quiet when

learning rather than asking the teacher. Another factor that makes students difficult to understand vocabulary is the lack of time for English learning. The teachers complain about the lack of time for English so a lot of material that has not been delivered well in this semester. Based on the observations in the class, it seems very real because the teacher has not delivered the material to the maximum and also many of the students who do not understand the material well because the lesson is finished. The teacher only explains briefly but the student can understand what is explained by her.

In this study, the writer found the difficulties faced by the students in mastering vocabulary which it can interfere with the English learning process and it is supported by the data principal observations and interviews. The first steps in successful teaching vocabulary are to identify the difficulties that faced by the students. It is in line with Rohmatillah (2002) proposes some difficulties that make some vocabulary more difficult there are pronunciation, spelling, and meaning. Besides that, the difficulty related to the low motivation of the student can be some other difficulties faced by the students in mastering vocabulary. In relation to the pronunciation, to know the pronunciation of students, the teacher gives some examples of related vocabulary about the material and then the students imitated. But many students are wrong in the pronunciation of the word. It is in line with Fraser (2000) pronunciation problems often arise from students who do not know how to articulate a

new language voice or are unable to speak the meaning of sound; even students do not have the muscles to make sounds because they are influenced by their mother tongue. Based on the findings, the student's pronunciation is the same. It was indicated by the results of the observation which showed that there were get a score of 2 it means the students are weak. In addition, students who were sampled for interviews also revealed that having difficulty in pronunciation of English. It can also influence the spelling of students' vocabulary. Meanwhile, spelling a word must be precise because if students misspelling the vocabulary it can alter the meaning of the word and also affect its pronunciation as well. It is in line with Sholeh & Muhaji (2004) stated the students often to misspelling consonant and vowel sounds of English words. This is due to differences in phonetic sound pronunciation or spelling system in English and Indonesian language. For example, the letter "G" in Indonesian is pronounced as / ge / whereas in English it is pronounced as / jei /, and for example, the letter "I" in Indonesian is spoken as / i / but in English is pronounced as / ai /. In term of the meaning of the word, in this case, knowing the meaning of the vocabulary is very important so that students can understand what has been taught by the teacher and also the learning process can take place smoothly. In addition, if students know the meaning of the vocabulary or the material the student can provide feedback to the teacher about the material in question. It is in line with Nida & Taber (1969) translating consist of reproducing the receptor language

the closest natural equivalence of source language message, firstly in term of meaning and secondly in term of style. Based on the explanation of the theory and also the results of the interviews indicated that the meaning of the word is one of the difficulties that make students become lazy in English lessons, especially in terms of vocabulary.

In relation to the low students motivation in learning vocabulary, based on Romiszowski (1984) that low performance can be caused by various factors that come from inside and outside of students. Based on the results of the interviews, especially with English teachers and observations. Students feel that lack of motivation is caused by factors outside the student, namely lack of attention from parents and also the student's home environment that is less supportive for developing students. So, when students in the class during the lesson only as formality students take lessons. Without encouragement to get something they want.

Lack of practice in pronunciation is one of the factors that cause students difficulty in understanding vocabulary. A student choosing to be silent is one example where students are reluctant to practice vocabulary pronunciation. In addition, many students who did not dare to try and also students were afraid of being wrong so they choose to avoid it or not do it. According to Gunarsa (2008) be afraid is caused by threats, so that someone will avoid himself and so on. That is what makes students less inclined to pronunciation using English. This also happens with students in class 7c where students feel afraid to practice vocabulary pronunciation.

The ability to remembering by students in class 7c is very low. This is evidenced by the results of interviews and observations conducted by researchers on students. The ability of weak students makes them difficult when remembering vocabulary in English. According to Illahi (2012), the difficulty of memorizing is the difficulty of an activity to instill a verbal material in memory so that it cannot be reproduced (recalled) literally. It happened with 7c students who have problems when remembering vocabulary after the English lesson is finished and replaced with another lesson.

The students low using a dictionary. The use of dictionary media is very important during the learning process and after the lesson. It is concerned with remembering the vocabulary in which the students search for the meaning of the vocabulary in the dictionary and then remember it. It is in line with Ivone (2005) vocabulary is taught by remembering the new words by looking at the meaning of them in a bilingual dictionary. Based on the results of the observations which only a few students who use the media dictionary well.

The impact of the lack of hours of English is that the teacher is only able to deliver the material briefly to the maximum extent possible. In addition, the teacher does not understand the difficulties experienced by students. It is in line with (Gilbert, 2008, pg.1) usually does not have enough time to pay attention to it and it is difficult to detect any difficulties that are actually faced by their students. The results of the data from the interview indicate that the teacher needs extra

time so that the teacher can deliver the material optimally and can also understand the difficulties experienced by students.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the study, it can be seen that there are some difficulties faced by students in mastering vocabulary at seventh C of SMPN 2 PADANGAN in the academic year 2017/2018. Difficulties faced by students almost all students have difficulty in pronouncing the words, how to write and spell, how the meaning of words, and the low student motivation.

The difficulties experienced by students are difficulties in the pronunciation of vocabulary and spelling the word because students are lazy to practice pronunciation because they feel afraid when they are wrong in pronunciation and spelling. In addition, students do not understand the meaning of vocabulary that keeps students silent during the lesson. And also low students motivation can also influence students' difficulties in understanding vocabulary which is caused by internal and external factors of students.

Based on the interview, the observation and also the described data above, we can conclude that the factors that can influence the students in mastering vocabulary are the lack of students practicing in vocabulary pronunciation; the students are less use the dictionaries, and the lack of time for English learning. The students must know the benefit from the importance of mastering vocabulary. With knowing those benefit it can make the students more active in trying pronouncing of

vocabulary and improve their ability in mastering vocabulary.

Meanwhile, English teachers are required to be more creative in terms of material delivery. This is done so that students do not feel bored during the lesson. In addition, the teacher must also know the difficulties faced by students in mastering vocabulary. So, the teacher must have good and fun teaching methods so that students do not feel pressured and have difficulty during English lesson. And also The writer hopes that this research can be used as a reference in subsequent studies. They can take some benefits of the tasks in designing their product. And also, the other researchers can find the other difficulties and factors that cause the students difficulties in mastering vocabulary.

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