Difficulties Faced By Thai Students' In Learning Vocabulary At Universitas Muhammadiyah Jember

Nasya Ika Fahira[1], Widya Oktarini[2], Yenny Mardiana Devanti[3], Agus Milu Susetyo[4]

[1,2,3] Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Muhammadiyah Jember

[4] Pendidikan Bahasa Indonesia Universitas Muhammadiyah Jember

Email : widya.oktarini@unmuhjember.ac.id

Abstrak

Belajar kosa kata sangat penting bagi siswa karena kosa kata merupakan hal utama dalam mempelajari suatu bahasa. Dalam mempelajari kosakata, siswa mungkin menghadapi kesulitan terutama bagi pelajar EFL, karena adanya perbedaan antara bahasa asli dan bahasa sasaran. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan kesulitan-kesulitan yang dihadapi siswa Thailand dalam mempelajari kosakata bahasa Inggris, untuk menemukan faktor-faktor penyebab kesulitan dalam mempelajari kosakata bahasa Inggris, dan untuk mengetahui strategi yang mereka gunakan untuk mengatasi kesulitan dalam mempelajari kosakata bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian deskriptif kualitatif. Teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan wawancara dan kuesioner. Partisipan dalam penelitian ini adalah empat mahasiswa Thailand semester delapan Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di Universitas Muhammadiyah Jember. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa semua siswa menghadapi kesulitan dalam kosakata, seperti mengetahui arti kata baru, pengucapan kata dan ejaan kata baru. Oleh karena itu, faktor penyebab kesulitan tersebut adalah faktor internal (kurangnya kesadaran diri) dan faktor eksternal (lingkungan). Strategi yang mereka gunakan untuk mengatasi kesulitan tersebut, seperti menggunakan google translate, mendengarkan lagu dan menonton film atau YouTube menggunakan subtitle bahasa Inggris. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa semua mahasiswa Thailand pada semester delapan Program Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di Universitas Muhammadiyah Jember menghadapi kesulitan dalam belajar kosakata.

Kata Kunci: *Kesulitan Kosa kata, Mahasiswa Thailand, Belajar Bahasa Inggris*

Abstract

Learning vocabulary is essential for students because vocabulary can be the first thing to learn a language. In learning vocabulary students may face the difficulties especially for EFL learners due to the difference between the original language and the target language. This study aimed to describe the difficulties faced by Thai students in learning English vocabulary, to find factors causes the difficulties in learning English vocabulary, and to find out the strategy they used to overcome the difficulties in learning English vocabulary. This research is descriptive qualitative. It used interview and questionnaire as instrument of collecting the data. The participants in this study include four Thai students in eighth semester of English Education Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Jember. Result of the study showed that all students faced difficulties in vocabulary, such as knowing meaning of a new words, pronouncing of a words and spelling of a new words. Therefore, factors contributed the difficulties are the internal factor (lack of self-awareness) and external factors (environment). The strategy they used to overcome the difficulties, such as using google translate, listening to songs and watching movies or YouTube with English subtitle. It can be concluded that all Thai students in eighth semester of English Language Education Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Jember faced the difficulties in learning vocabulary.

Keywords: *Vocabulary difficulties; Thai students, Learning English*

INTRODUCTION

One of the important components of language is vocabulary. In learning a mother tongue or any foreign language, vocabulary is the most significant component. Vocabulary is one of the most essential parts, along with phonetics/pronunciation and grammar, required to learn a foreign language (Pan & Xu, 2011). In addition, vocabulary is the basis for language skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. (Hatch & Brown, 1995) state without learning the vocabulary, it is difficult to attain any language proficiency. The more people master vocabulary the more they can speak, write, read and listen as they want. It means that by mastering vocabulary give a contribution for learners perform their skills better.

In learning vocabulary students may face the difficulties especially for EFL learners. Due to the difference between the original language and the target language. In addition, (Afzal, 2019) state that vocabulary learning is difficult, especially for non-native English speakers who have problems with new word meanings, spelling, pronunciation, correct use of words, and inference of meaning from context. The same problem might happen to Thai students who study at Universitas Muhammadiyah Jember especially in English Language Education Program. They faced some difficulties in learning English vocabulary, such as pronouncing a words, don't know meaning of a new words etc. This problem may happen due to many factors such as differences between mother tongue and English, lack of motivation to learning English and so on.

In previous study, several researchers discussed about students difficulties students in learning English vocabulary. There is a research with almost have same title from Afzal, N. (2019), entitled A Study on Vocabulary-learning Problems Encountered by BA English Majors at the University Level of Education. In this research aims at investigating the problems faced by English majors in learning the vocabulary at Prince Stattam bin Abdulaziz University (PSAU) in Saudi Arabia. Another researcher conducts the same research about difficulties learning English vocabulary from Paduttungi, A. P. (2020) a study on eight grade Students' difficulties in learning vocabulary at SMP NEGERI 2 Nglegok. In this Study the purpose of his research was to know students' difficulties in learning Vocabulary of the eighth grade students.

From the two previous study, it can be seen that the researcher focuses on the difficulties faced by students and the factors that enable difficulties in vocabulary. The previous researchers did not explain how students overcome difficulties in vocabulary. From the explanation above, this study focused on what kind of difficulties faced by Thai students in learning English vocabulary, factors caused the difficulties, and their strategy to overcome the difficulties.

METHOD

The type of this research used qualitative descriptive method was to answer question and describe difficulties in learning English vocabulary faced by Thai students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Jember.   To collect the data this study used interview and questionnaire.

The type of interview is in depth interview it aims to dig information more specifically about what kinds of vocabulary difficulties that they face, factors that cause the difficulties, and their strategy to overcome the difficulties while open ended question aims to know in general the difficulties faced by Thai students in learning vocabulary.

The data from interview was analyzed with model of Miles and Huberman (1992) activities in data analysis are data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing or verification. While to analyze questionnaire there are some steps, gather result of questionnaire, identifying the answers given by Thai students, if there is an answer that is not suitable, the answer will be deleted. After that the answers are grouped based on the same answer or similar; the result of the answer that has been obtained is then explained in detail.

To verify the trustworthiness of the collected data that is related to the Thai students' difficulties who study at the Universitas of Muhammadiyah Jember, the researcher applied triangulation of technique and triangulation of source. According to (Flick, 2004) triangulation refer to use of multiple data collection techniques and sources to strengthen the credibility of outcomes and enables different interpretations to be included in data. Triangulation of techniques, means that

researchers use different data collection techniques to obtain data from the same source or subjects. In this research, the researcher uses two different techniques to collect the data which is interview and questionnaire. Triangulation of source, means to get data from different sources with the same technique. In this research, the researcher takes four different individuals as the subjects.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In completing this research, the results were obtained from the four subjects (SB, MS, PA, and PMP) who were 8th semester students of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education English Language Education Program. After conducting interview and questionnaire related to kind of difficulties faced by Thai students in learning English vocabulary, factors cause the difficulties, and their strategy to overcome the difficulties. The results of the research findings of open questionnaire and interview were presented in the descripted below.

Kind of Difficulties Faced by Thai students in Learning English Vocabulary

Based on the answers of all participants from questionnaire and interview it was found that the difficulties faced by Thai students are they don't know meaning of the words, pronunciation a new word, and spelling of the words. The first kinds of difficulties is the knowing the meaning of a new words, one of the biggest difficulties faced by Thai. Knowing as many word as possible in a foreign language is very important. The better the chances of understanding them. But sometimes people get stuck in situations where the vocabulary they have is not enough. According to Altyari, (2017); Farjami & Aidinlou (2013) state that the learners of English often face problems in discovering the meanings of new words and retaining them in their memory. Learning L2 vocabulary enhances the learners' understanding of the target language.

The second is pronunciation of a words, most Thai students state that difficulties in pronunciation because the different of pronunciation in Thai language and English language and also different between written and what they heard. According to Rohmatillah (2017) confirms the students' difficulties in pronouncing the words this is mainly due to the difference in spoken and written English, for instance, pronouncing words like muscle, listen and so on. The incorrect pronunciation is often caused by the lack of sound similarity between English and the students" native language.

The third is spelling of the words, the learners have to focus on what words look (spelling) and what they sound (pronunciation). Usually, errors are caused when students fail to perceive a sound-spelling mismatch, which ultimately causes word-learning difficulties. Moreover, different spelling patterns can also cause confusion where the pronunciation is concerned. Based on the previous study by Rahman, F. (2016) mention that the researcher found the kinds of difficulties faced by students in vocabulary mastery were, most of students have difficulties in grammar, how to understand the meaning of words, how to spell and other difficulties such as identifying noun-adjective vocabulary and ma mastery were, most of students have difficulties in grammar, how to understand the meaning of words, how to spell and other difficulties such as identifying noun-adjective vocabulary and making translation.

Factors Cause the Difficulties Faced by Thai Students' in Learning English Vocabulary

Based on result data from interview and questionnaire it can conclude that many factors cause Thai students to have difficulty in learning vocabulary. The factors causing vocabulary are as follows, the internal and external factor. The internal factors from the individual, the lack of self-awareness to learn vocabulary and the lack of mastery of English vocabulary. Thai students are dominant to translate words from Thai and then to English. Furthermore, external factors the environment is less supportive because in daily they are only communicate with Thai students and rarely communicates using English. Hambali, M. (2018) mention the factors contributing to those difficulties were internal factors which included 1) lack of students" interest in learning English especially in learning English vocabulary, 2) lack of students" motivation in learning English, and external factors such as 1) technique or method

that used by the teachers in Teaching English vocabulary 2) students" environment.

Strategy to Overcome the Difficulties Faced by Thai Students' in Learning English Vocabulary

From the result there are some strategy that Thai students often use to overcome vocabulary difficulties. Use a google translate, Thai students' always use google translate to translate the meaning of difficult vocabulary or vocabulary they just knew. Then listen to songs, according to Thai students listening to songs can be one of the strategies they use to overcome difficulties in vocabulary. Listening to songs can add to the vocabulary of Thai students. Next, watch movies or YouTube using English subtitles. Watch a movie with English subtitles make it easy for Thai students to learn vocabulary and improve pronunciation.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research on an analysis of difficulties faced by Thai students in learning English vocabulary at the Universitas Muhammadiyah Jember, the author draws the following conclusions:

1. The kinds of difficulties faced by Thai students in learning English vocabulary are knowing meaning a new words, how to pronouncing a word, and spelling of the words.

2. There are two factors that cause Thai students to experience difficulties in vocabulary, internal and external factors. Internal factor such as the lack of self-awareness to learn vocabulary, the lack of mastery of English vocabulary so that they are dominant to translate words from Thai and then to English. Furthermore, external factor is the environment less supportive, because rarely to communicates using English.

3. There are several strategy that Thai students use in overcoming difficulties in vocabulary, that Thai students often use to overcome vocabulary difficulties is to use, google translate to translate words, listen to songs and, watch movies / YouTube using English subtitles.

REFERENCES

Afzal, N. (2019). A study on Vocabulary Learning Problems Encountered by BA English Majors at the University Level of Education. *Arab world English Journal* , 81-98.

Flick, U. (2004). Triangulation in quqlitative research. A companion to qualitative research. 178-183.

Hambali, M. (2018). Students Vocabulary Learning DIfficulties and Teacher Strategy A Case Sudy at MTS. AL-AZIZAH PUTRA KAPEK in academic year 2017/2018). *Doctoral diserattion,Universitas Mataram.*

Hatch, E. &. (1995). *Vocabulary, Semantics, and Language Education.* Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.

Ahyar, H. (2020). *Buku Metode Penelitian Kualitatif& Kuantitatif.* Yogyakarta: CV.Pustaka Ilmu.

Pan, Q., & X. R. (2011). Vocabulary Teaching in English Language Teaching. In Theory and Practice in Language Studies . *Finland: Academy Publisher Manufactured* , 1586-1589.

Rahman, F. (2016). An Analysis of Students'Difficulties In Vocabulary Mastery: A Survey Study at Second Grade Students of SMPN 19 MATARAM in academic year 2015/2016. *Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Mataram.*

Rohmatillah, R. (2017). A study on Students' DIfficulties in Learning Vocabulary. *English Education : Jurnal Tadris Bahasa Inggris,* , 75-93.

Farjami, F., & Aidinlou, N. A. (2013). (Farjrami, 2013)

International Journal of Language and Linguistics. *Special Issue: Language Teaching and Learning Key Principles (LTLKP)*, 1(4-1), 1-5.

Altyari, A.W. (2017). English Vocabulary Uptake by Saudi Arabic Speaking Students at Public Schools. *British Journal of English Linguistics*, 5 (1), 10-16