

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

In this chapter, the researcher discusses theories related to the research topic. In the beginning, it discusses vocabulary and vocabulary learning. The next is the types of vocabulary. It is then followed by an explanation concerning the importance of learning vocabulary. The next section of this chapter explains the problems the students face in learning vocabulary. The following section deals with the review on the strategies in learning English vocabulary. The next is review of related studies. This chapter ends with the conceptual framework.

#### **Vocabulary and Vocabulary Learning**

**Vocabulary.** There are many explanations of vocabulary stated by some experts. Read (2000) related vocabulary to words. He stated, “words are the basic building blocks of a language, the units of meaning from which larger structure such as sentences, paragraphs, and the whole texts are formed” (p.1). Meanwhile, Ahour & Salamzadeh (2014) mentioned that vocabulary is central to language and language learning and vocabulary learning is crucial to the language learners. In the domain of second language learning, it is widely known that vocabulary is necessary part of the four language skills. Vocabulary is one of the important language elements that support the skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Carranza, Manga, Dio, Jamora, & Romero, 2015).

Yang and Dai (2012) define that vocabulary is the most sizable and uncontrollable component in the learning of any language, whether first language or second language. No language acquisition can take place without the acquisition of word. In addition, Hiebert and Kamil (2005) stated vocabulary as knowledge of words and words meaning in both oral and written and in productive and receptive forms. More particularly, learners must know kinds of words that will increasingly their comprehension in reading a text.

**Vocabulary Learning.** Vocabulary learning means learning about the words or new vocabulary, and also about how to use the vocabulary into correct usage. It is determined by the context where it is formed and its relation to other words (Agusta, 2015). Learning vocabulary is acquiring the words with their meaning, whether through some direct link or translated into first language (Cook, 2008). According to Harmer (1991), vocabulary learning is more than presenting new words and of course it has its place but there are other issues too. Vocabulary learning is not only interaction but also discovery techniques for the beginners. Harmer (1991) concluded that knowing a word means knowing about meaning, word use, word formation, and word grammar. The learners need to know more of vocabularies. It means that the students need to memorize and recall a lot of vocabulary that have been mastered.

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that vocabulary is the knowledge of words and word meanings. It is about the words in a language used to express meaning. Therefore, learning vocabulary is a crucial matter in developing

their English. Moreover, vocabulary is one of the language aspects that should be learned. Vocabulary learning is a set of learning words also learning how to use strategies to manage the unknown or unfamiliar words. Vocabulary mastery is important in order to be able to speak, write, and listen learners have to know vocabulary first. It is the basic in learning English language. The richer the vocabulary that can be mastered by the students, the better the skill that can be reached by the students in using language.

### **The Importance of Vocabulary in Learning Language**

Vocabulary plays important roles in language learning. The more students know the vocabulary, the more they develop their four language skills. According to Carranza, Manga, Dio, Jamora, and Romero (2015), vocabulary is a necessary part of the four language skills. Vocabulary is one of the important language elements that encouragement the skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. It also helps in verbal communication and understands information.

The following experts propose the idea of the importance of vocabulary in language learning. McCarthy (1990) stated vocabulary is the largest component in any language. No matter how well the students learn grammar, no matter the successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wide the meanings, communication in L2 cannot happen in any meaningful way. Similarly, Fisher and Frey (2014) mention vocabulary is a meaningful predictor of overall reading comprehension and student performance. When the reader knows a lot of

words, they can read more complex texts. When writers know more a lot of words, they can compose more refined documents.

According to Rush (2010), the more learners have word that allow learners to use more descriptive words to better communicate their mind in their activity such as write an essay because, in writing, learner should master more than 1-2000 words. It will also allow learner to better understand information that they are reading or listening, thus increasing their memory. Rush (2010) stated that having more vocabulary is not only important to help your verbal communication flow and avoid using noises such as, "umm" and "uhh" but also able to use more various words in speaking. Furthermore, the more vocabulary students have, they will more understand in speaking, writing and express the mindset either oral or written. In opposition, the less English vocabulary that students have, it makes difficult to understand to speech.

In addition, Alqahtani(2015) said a little of words can make leaner difficult in communication because vocabulary learning is significant in learning a second language. Schmitt (2000) stressed that “lexical knowledge is central to communicative competence and to the acquisition of a second language” (p. 55). The importance of vocabulary has shown in school and outside. According to Alqahtani (2015), the acquisition of vocabulary is crucial for successful second language use in the form of speaking and writing text. They also argue that if without wide vocabulary, maybe they will not use the structure and functions for comprehensible communication.

It has been shown that many researchers argue that vocabulary is a pillar in learning a language. Vocabulary is one of the most important for mastery of a language. We can conclude that without grammar book, we still can speak English even there are not perfect. But if we carry dictionaries we can do it well. Regularly report that the lack of vocabulary is a major problem.

### **The Problems Faced by Students in Learning Vocabulary**

Vocabulary is an important aspect of language learning. Learning vocabulary also needs a process. However, many students face difficulty in mastering vocabulary when they are learning. According to Harmer (1991), the problematic issue of learning vocabulary is meaning. Some words have more than one meaning. We know that book means a collection of words between covers. But, of course, that book has much meaning. The point is even there is the same collection of sounds and words can have many different meaning. The second is words have synonyms. When we say bad and evil, these words are quite same in meaning. The word used depends on the context and situation. Sometimes, it is difficult to find the real synonyms (Harmer, 1991).

According to Wu and Huang (2017), vocabulary is the critical element for language learners. It is developing skill vocabulary knowledge in their communication. However, learning the second language is difficult and stressful. Students feel boring in memorizing vocabulary, and they lack of motivation in a

learning activity. Similarly, Shelby (n.d.) said, there are few difficulties in vocabulary learning. The vocabulary is the most difficult aspect of learning a second language. They should concentrate first on learning the most frequently used. The multiple sense English words and synonyms are common difficulties for foreigner learners. Other difficulties with learning and using English vocabulary include fixed word collocations, phrasal verbs, idioms, proverbs and regional differences in vocabulary usage. In short, the influence of L1 on the ESL word recognition. The learners often have trouble with word form. Learners often transfer their first language processing into the second language. Students have difficulties with the spelling of English vowels (Saigh & Schmitt, 2012).

Besides, the problems student faced when learning vocabulary are the pronunciation, the spelling, the word “s” idiom, false cognates and distinction between homophones. Moreover, the problem is also in deciding which words are worth learning and how to organize the vocabulary Rush (2010).

In summary, there are some problems faced by students in learning English. The students are weak in pronouncing, spelling, the word “s” idiom, false cognates and distinction between homophones. They cannot distinguish similarities words. The student just knows the basic words without familiar how to spell them. Besides that, they just have a few words. Therefore, they find difficulties when they use it to speak, write and son.

## **The Strategies in Learning Vocabulary**

Vocabulary is essential in learning a second language. Most of the language learners know that vocabulary is important but they do not aware of the fact that the vocabulary learning strategies can help them learn vocabulary successfully. Learning strategy is the way that they acquire for information they do not know. Vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) “are steps taken by the language learners to learn new English vocabulary”(Mustapha & Asgari, 2011, p. 85). There are a wide rang of vocabulary learning strategies that are proposed by the researcher. Mustapha and Asgari (2011) divided these strategies into three main categories: “Metacognitive”, “Cognitive”, and “Socio-affective” strategies.

Based on Cook (2008), there divide the strategies for understanding and learning vocabulary into two strategies. There are strategies for understanding the meaning of words and strategies for acquiring words.

**Strategies for nderstanding the meaning of words.** There are some strategies to learn the meaning of words. There are set below:

***Guess from the situation or context.*** This is the natural process of getting the meaning for unknown words. Learners generally guess words from the context. For example, at a restaurant table; the learners might be exposed to unknown words and they can guess the sentence into ‘Are you waiting for somebody?’ ‘Can I borrow this chair?’ ‘Could I sit down here?’. Guessing is the most commonly used strategy in a second language, and exactly it can go wrong or right understanding.

***Use a dictionary.*** This is the most popular way of getting the meaning of new words. Dictionary can be used in all skills, it is used minimally in speaking, but it is important during reading and writing. Students regularly use it as a supporter for irregular word. Many students seem to use a pocket electronic dictionary to find the meaning of words.

***Make deductions from the word form.*** Another way of discovering the meaning of words is to try to deduce it from its actual form. More than 50 percent of students in Schmitt's survey found this is a useful strategy. The word 'regolith' they faced in other words with the morpheme 'lith', such as in 'megalith', can be understood as a big stone or it can be guessed that 'lith' is something to do with stone. Besides, Taylor (1996) practice word forms by getting the students to do the reverse operation of adding prefixes such as 'un-' or 'in-' to words such as 'efficient' and 'sociable'.

***Link to cognates.*** One more way is to link the words with its cognate word. This strategy is popular in Schmitt's survey. Many languages have words that are similar in form, particularly if the languages are closely related. For example, English 'chair' versus France 'chaise', it is a similarity in pronunciation so, students are easy to link the words with the root or cognate of words.

**Strategies for acquiring words.** This is another strategy to remember the words. Some of the strategies that learners use are set out below:



***Repeating and rote learning.*** The common way to remember the word is to keep practicing. It repeats the word again and again until the learners know it by heart. Repetition of the words by using flashcard also common in learning language, by taking out the ones known until none are left.

***Organizing words in the mind.*** Much teaching of vocabulary implies that the effective way of learning vocabulary is to organize the words into groups in our mind. Students should have activity in learning vocabulary before they start to get the lesson. Organizing may consists of putting related words in a word map. Such as getting students to fill in empty bubbles in a diagram that link 'Air travel' to 'Luggage'. Another way is thinking about the words from, say word endings such as '-er' or prefix such as 'con-'. Organizing the words in groups by common morphology linked to meaning may be a useful way of remembering them.

***Linking to existing knowledge.*** This strategy is also a common way of remembering new vocabulary. This strategy exploits the different memory systems in our minds for linking new information to old. Another way of remembering vocabulary is by linking what is learned to something already known through mental imagery. Such as to remember new vocabulary, think about the picture that reminds you of the word, but first you need to memorize a simple scheme for string information.

By the classifications of vocabulary learning strategies above, there are many

strategies that have shown by experts. It could be summarized that the vocabulary learning strategies that are proposed by the experts have similar purposes. The purposes are improving vocabulary by learning and memorizing for a long period time and mastering vocabulary by stimulating students' cognitive or metacognitive strategies.

### **Review of Related Studies**

To compare with this study, the researcher took two examples of studies that have the same characteristics as this research. The first research was conducted by Yang and Dai (2012). The title of the study is "Vocabulary Memorizing Strategies by Chinese University Students". This study investigated the vocabulary learning strategies they preferred to use and the ones less to use. This study used questionnaire as a data collection method. The respondents were 68 students at Chinese university at Petroleum. In this study, the students apparently tended to use structural association and semantic strategies, though rote repetition remains appealing to some of them and mnemonic devices was unpopular to them. The students took notes of vocabulary items in the margins of textbook and word list memorization was appealing to them. The results of the study have shown that the two most frequently used strategies are structural association and semantic strategies followed by rote repetition and mnemonic devices.

Another research related to the vocabulary learning strategy was conducted by Ahour and Salamzadeh (2014). The objective of this research is to find out the

vocabulary learning strategies mostly used by poor Iranian high school students and which strategy has the highest and lowest use among the students. The researcher used questionnaire to select the data. The participants of the study were 45 female students. The questionnaire consisted of 49 items with 4 categories including Metacognitive VLS, Cognitive VLS, Social VLS and Affective VLS. The results of this study showed that the category of cognitive strategies obtains the highest among all categories. The second highest is the Affective strategies followed by the category of Social strategies and finally Metacognitive strategies. To summarize, the most frequently used strategy among Iranian female high school students is cognitive strategies and the least used strategy is metacognitive strategy. The poor female Iranian high school students prefer using or converting the language material in learning and memorizing vocabulary.

Based on the research above, there are some aspects of this current research that are similar and different from the previous studies. The similarity of them is that they have same objectives. They investigated the vocabulary learning strategy used by students. The difference of them is that both previous research focused on the strategy students mostly used and less used in learning vocabulary. This current study aimed to find out the vocabulary learning strategy of Thai students and to explore the problems they faced in learning vocabulary. Moreover, these previous research belong to quantitative research and used questionnaire to collect the data. This current research is qualitative research and used interview to collect the data. Besides, these all research has the different respondents. It can be concluded that all studies were

about vocabulary learning strategy, but had different focus and research methods.