

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **A. Theoretical Review**

##### **1.1 Definition of Mastering Vocabulary**

Learning a new language requires a strong vocabulary. This suggests that you need to know the vocabulary of the language you are learning. Words can be defined in a variety of ways. There are some vocabulary terms that experts have suggested.

According to Richards and Renandya (2002: 255), vocabulary is a significant component of language proficiency and serves as a basis for students' speech, listening, reading, and writing. Without a large vocabulary and methods for picking up new words, students frequently fall short of their potential and may become disinclined to use the opportunities for language learning that are available to them, such as reading, watching television, listening to native speakers, listening to the radio, and using the language in various contexts. Hatch provides the alternative definition of vocabulary.

Hatch and Brown (1995: 1) provided an alternative definition of vocabulary, stating that it is a list or collection of terms exclusive to a language or a list or collection of words that individual language speakers may employ. Furthermore, Hatch and Brown (1995:1) claim that

vocabulary is the unique system of alphabetical order.

Vocabulary, according to Thornbury (2002), is defined as words or terms that have meaning; speakers are unable to comprehend any information provided if they are unaware of the meaning of the word.

Nation (2001) listed a few vocabulary knowledge-related factors, each of which had three sub-aspects. Use (grammatical function, collocation, and usage limits), meaning (form and meaning, concept and referents, and associations), and form (spoken, written, and word parts).

The researcher comes to the conclusion that vocabulary is a list of words with distinct meanings that constitute a language that people use to communicate based on some of the definitions given above..

Lubis (2017, p. 12) defined vocabulary mastery as the ability to fully understand and utilise a set of words in a language, enabling communication within specific groups or professions. It is an essential component of English language learning at all levels.

Cahyono & Widiati (2008, p. 21) emphasised that vocabulary mastery is crucial for developing language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Without sufficient vocabulary, it is impossible to achieve fluency or comprehension in any of these areas.

While McCarten (2007) defined vocabulary as a

challenging learning experience for students. This is attributed to the extensive scope of the work and the wide range of vocabulary to be acquired, encompassing singular and plural terms, along with crucial vocabulary methods that are equally significant as grammatical structures and idiomatic expressions.

The concept of difficulties in vocabulary learning can be broken into two aspects: challenges and vocabulary mastery.

According to Subini (2010, p. 9), as cited by Subhi, S. N., & Yasin, S. M. (2015), difficulties refer to conditions that present obstacles in achieving objectives, requiring greater effort to overcome them.

Drawing from the theories of the aforementioned experts, it can be inferred that vocabulary is the most crucial component of language since it is a collection of words that contribute to sentences that are utilised as building blocks for English-language communication.

## **1.2. Indicator of Students' Difficulties in Mastering Vocabulary**

Vocabulary acquisition is critical in learning a foreign language, as sufficient vocabulary is necessary to communicate effectively. Thornbury (2002, p. 27) and Cameron (2001, p. 88) identified pronunciation, spelling, grammar, and meaning as primary obstacles in vocabulary

learning. Thornbury (2002, p. 27) also highlighted factors such as word length, complexity, and contextual nuances, including connotation and idiomatic usage, as challenges.

Rohmatillah (2017, p. 60) noted that students often struggle with pronunciation, spelling, writing, and grammar. Many students also find it difficult to determine the meaning of words and apply them in context. From these expert opinions, it is clear that challenges with pronunciation, spelling, grammar, and meaning are key indicators of vocabulary comprehension issues among students.

According to the aforementioned idea, factors including word pronunciation, word arrangement, word translation, and word spelling are typical markers of pupils' vocabulary comprehension challenges.

There are several indicators of students' difficulties in understanding English vocabulary as follows:

1. Pronunciation

Nurmalita (2016, p. 253) in Komalasari, D.A. (2022, p. 269) stated that pronunciation ability encompasses accuracy, fluency, intonation, and stress. Pronunciation in English differs significantly from Indonesian, particularly in vowels, consonants, and diphthongs.

2. Spelling

Reed (2012) in Ramdhini et al. (2016, p. 189) described

three parameters for evaluating English spelling proficiency: phonemic, alphabetic, and mixed parameters.

### 3. Grammar

Roinah (2019, p. 158) in Komalasari, D.A. (2022, p. 269-270) emphasized that grammar is the framework for arranging language elements into structured sentences. Mastering grammar simplifies the process of learning English, especially in sentence construction.

### 4. Meaning

Harmer (2001, p. 16) in Komalasari, D.A. (2022, p. 270) highlighted several aspects of vocabulary meaning, including synonyms, antonyms, connotations, denotations, idioms, and collocations. These factors play an integral role in understanding nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.

According to the aforementioned idea, students' poor pronunciation of words, including intonation, diphthongs, word structure, and spelling, is one of the main causes of their difficulties learning English, particularly vocabulary. And being able to comprehend word patterns when speaking English with others, including organising grammar and converting phrases into English vocabulary.

## 1.3 Factor of Students' Problems In Learning Vocabulary

The first step in effectively teaching vocabulary is

to determine the challenges that the pupils are facing.

Thornbury (2004: 27) suggests the following elements that contribute to the difficulty of certain words:

a. The pronunciation

According to research, learning words that are hard to pronounce is more challenging.

b. Spelling

Inconsistencies between sounds and spellings can lead to pronunciation or spelling mistakes and make a word more challenging. There are some obvious anomalies, even if the majority of English spelling is generally correct. Particularly troublesome are words like “foreign,” “listen,” “headache,” “climbing,” “boresome,” “honest,” “cabinet,” “muscle,” and so on that contain silent letters.

c. Complexity and length.

It appears that learning long words is no more challenging than learning short ones. However, high frequency terms are generally short in English, which means that learners are likely to encounter them more frequently, which enhances their “learnability.”

d. Grammar.

The word’s related grammar can also be



troublesome, particularly if it deviates from its L1 counterpart. It can be more challenging to remember whether a verb like “enjoy,” “love,” or “hope” is preceded by an infinitive (to swim) or a -ing form (swimming).

e. Meaning.

Students are prone to misunderstand words when their meanings overlap. An example of make and do is when you schedule an appointment and prepare breakfast, but you also complete a questionnaire and do the cleaning.

f. Connotation, idiomaticity, and range.

Generally speaking, words with a wide range of applications will be viewed as simpler than their equivalents with a more constrained range. For instance, thin is a safer option than skinny, slim, slender, etc., and put is a far more general word than impose, place, position, etc. Additionally, it can be problematic to be unclear about the meaning of some words. For instance, an eccentric word may not have a negative connotation in English, but its closest equivalent in other languages may be deviant; propaganda may have a negative connotation in English, but its equivalent may simply mean publicity; and, lastly, idiomatic

words or expressions (like make up your mind, keep an eye on, etc.) will usually be more difficult to understand than words whose meaning is clear (decide, watch).

Gower, Philips, and Walter (1995: 143) describe the factors that determine whether a vocabulary item is easy or challenging. A variety of factors can determine how simple or difficult a vocabulary item is:

a. Comparability to L1.

The degree to which a vocabulary item resembles the student's first language in both form and meaning is frequently a determining factor in its difficulty. Rather than being helpful, words that are similar in the original language and English could be deceptive.

b. Similarity to already-known.

English words After learning a little bit of English, children find it simpler to understand words that are connected to words they already know than ones that are not. If pupils have already encountered the word friendly, for instance, they ought to be able to infer what unpleasant means.

c. Significance.

The meaning of the word is another challenging



concept that students must grasp. For instance, does a native speaker perceive the word as having a positive or bad meaning? One might use either skinny or slender to describe someone who is thin, but both terms have rather different meanings, and by using one instead of the other, the speaker expresses a certain mindset.

d. Pronouncing and spelling.

Students from languages with more regular spelling systems may find it difficult to understand the spelling of many English terms. Confusion about pronunciation can also result from specific spelling patterns. For instance, it's simple to see why a lot of kids mispronounce, misspell, and think the following words: tough, thorough, through, though, and thought.

e. Multiple-word items.

Phrasal verbs like "to put someone up" or compound nouns like "sports car" or "tennis shoes" are examples of lexical items that are made up of many words. Due to their simple word structure (usually prepositions or adverbs), phrasal verbs are notoriously challenging for English language learners.

f. Collocation

It can also be challenging to understand how a lexical item collocates, or “goes with,” other elements. For instance, we can say that there is a powerful wind and strong coffee, but it’s actually a mild wind and weak coffee, and individuals are hurt or wounded, but items are harmed.

- g. Use that is appropriate.

It might sometimes be difficult to know when to use terminology correctly. Certain terms and phrases can only be used in specific situations (for instance, “He is pushing fifty” can be used to signify “almost”). We don’t say “he’s pushing there,” though, because pushing is only used in this context with elderly people. Additionally, it’s critical that kids understand if a term or phrase is formal or informal.

Based on the aforementioned idea, it can be inferred that a number of characteristics, including word pronunciation and spelling, cause pupils to struggle. These elements have a significant impact on the difficulty of learning a language, particularly vocabulary. Enhancing vocabulary comprehension is crucial for effective English communication.

#### **1.4 The Importance of Vocabulary Mastery**

Vocabulary mastery is crucial for anyone learning English as a second or foreign language. Expanding one's vocabulary is crucial for efficient language use and for producing coherent written and spoken texts, claims Alqahtani (2015, p. 22). In both ESL and EFL contexts, vocabulary is crucial for enhancing speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. Speaking effectively becomes difficult when one's vocabulary is small.

Vocabulary can be said to be the key to a person's success in speaking English (Nakhlah, 2016). An abundant vocabulary list will make someone able to speak English better. Vocabulary is utilized not just for determining word meanings but also for discovering synonyms, phrases, and other related information. Vocabulary is fundamental for strengthening listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills in the study of English as a second language (Sari & Sutopo, 2018).

When learning a foreign language, pupils must possess and thoroughly understand vocabulary as a crucial skill. Vocabulary is essential for both learning and using language (Ronaghi et al., 2015). In other words, vocabulary is the essence of language.

Considering that vocabulary is one of the key components of English, particularly when engaging or

conversing with others, it is imperative that we acquire it, according to the experts mentioned above. In order to improve our comprehension of English vocabulary in both verbal and nonverbal communication, we must expand our vocabulary.

## **B. Previous Studies.**

The first, Diah Ayu Kemalasari (2021), In her study titled *"An Analysis of Student Difficulties in Mastering Vocabulary in Eighth Grade at SMPN 06 Kotabumi in the Academic Year 2021/2022,"* Diah Ayu explored the challenges faced by eighth-grade students in vocabulary acquisition. Using a qualitative approach, she employed case study methods involving interviews and observations. The research found that a lack of grammar knowledge and low learning motivation were key obstacles for students in mastering vocabulary.

Second, Gisma Wijayana, Refi Ranto Rozak, and Ima Isnaini T.R. (2018), In their study *"An Analysis of Student Difficulties in Mastering Vocabulary,"* conducted at SMPN 2 Padangan, the researchers used a qualitative approach to study seventh-grade students. From a sample of 28 students, the study revealed that low motivation was a significant factor hindering vocabulary learning.

Third, Bimas Reskiawan, Netty Huzniati Andas, and Hajra Hajra (2020). Their study, titled *"A Study on Students'*

*Difficulties in Vocabulary Mastery at First Grade Students of SMPN 1 Baula,"* utilized a qualitative research design. Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews with 20 participants. The study found that students struggled with grammar, pronunciation, and spelling, which affected their vocabulary mastery.

Fourth, Malsela, Sisvia (2018). *Students' problems and learning strategies in gaining knowledge of the English vocabulary of eighth graders at SMP N 9 Sarolangun.* The purposes of this present day have been to find out students issues and also to explain the use of learning strategies in vocabulary mastery amongst eighth graders in SMP N 9 Sarolangun. The total sampling approach was used, wherein the data were gathered from 126 students in 5 trainings by means of the questionnaire. And they have been analysed based on the Creswell technique. There are four components associated with students' troubles in vocabulary mastery (meaning, translation, pronunciation, and grammar) and three elements for mastering strategies (using reference cloth, practice, and phrase lists). It can be concluded that this study uses a quantitative descriptive method in which researchers use their statistical strategies through spreading questions or questionnaires in their research.

Five, Anissa'ul Afidah, Moch. Imam Machfudi (2022) *State Islamic University Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember,*

With the title *Students Difficulties in Vocabulary Mastery*. The function of this look had been to explain the students' difficulties in vocabulary mastery and the elements that brought about students' problems in gaining knowledge of vocabulary. This research employed a qualitative Approach using a phenomenology design.

The information had been gathered by using observation, interviews, and document evaluation. Information method and data source triangulation had been used to validate the collated records. The end result of this study was that numerous students had difficulties with vocabulary mastery. This study confirmed that: first, the problems encountered with the aid of students were that the students got problems in translating phrases or sentences in English into Indonesian and vice versa. Students additionally experienced difficulties in forming the meaning of words.

Pronunciation, misspelling, and remembering or memorising English vocabulary. Secondly, there had been a few elements that caused students to have problems with vocabulary mastery. Students have been reluctant to open dictionaries and less involved in gaining knowledge of English. This circumstance became the drawback for them to exercise English regularly.

The alternative troubles have been caused by external factors, including inadequate facilities and the terrible effects

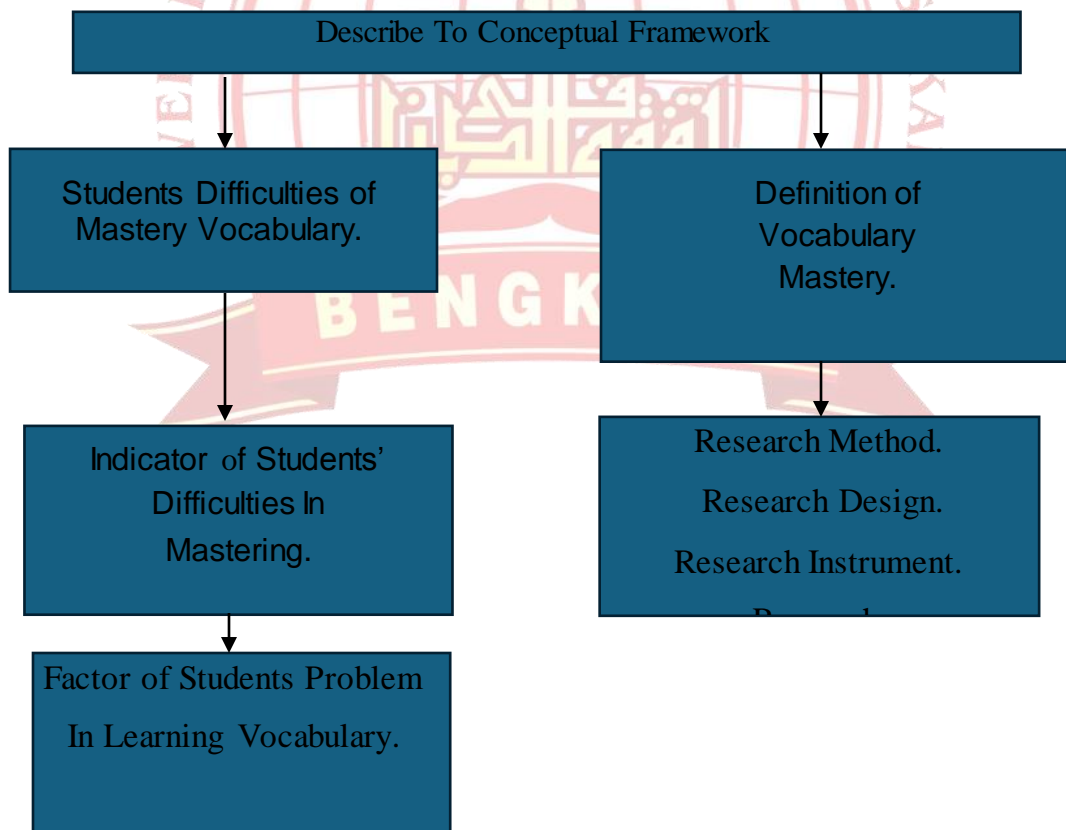


on students that have made it tough to examine English, especially vocabulary mastery.

From previous research, I found a gap in my study. To distinguish my research from previous research, I use different research, location, and data collection techniques. How do you take technical analysis using questions or questionnaires, survey techniques, and interviews in research? In addition, the issues studied here are almost the same as the previous study, where this study focusses on the problem of student difficulties in understanding the English vocabulary in the school, which distinguishes this research from previous research issues, location, population, and sample, and students' understanding of grammar, pronunciation, and motivation of student learning here lower English motivation mainly understood in English vocabulary in school. Students are more often playing than learning English in the classroom. In addition, the impact of the English language among students is still less because English is the second language, which also affects the ability of students to understand the vocabulary in school. The reason is because the focus is only on learning English, which is a foreign language in Indonesia. Here I take research with the title of student difficulties in mastering the vocabulary (descriptive quantitative students of eighth grade, SMPN 06 Kaur).

### C. Conceptual Framework

Vocabulary is very important in language components, especially in speaking. Vocabulary is a supporting element that is formed in every structure of language meaning used to communicate both verbally and in writing. Where here there are many difficulties regarding the use of English vocabulary, such as pronunciation of words, spelling of words, composing sentences, and language translators because they don't understand the vocabulary. Therefore, here the researcher describes the conceptual framework of this research as follows:



#### **D. Hypothesis**

Research objects are greatly impacted by hypotheses (Sugiyono, 2013: 65–66). In reference to the problem's background as previously described and the presumptions made. In light of this, the researcher put out the hypothesis that, following instruction using the word mapping technique, students' mastery of understanding increased. The researcher developed a short-term hypothesis to solve the problem based on the framework and problem formulation previously described, which is as follows:

Based on the previous discussion behind this research, the following hypothesis is formulated :

Ha : There is Students Difficulty In Mastering Vocabulary in Eighth Graders at SMPN 06 KAUR.

Ho : There is no Students Difficulty In Mastering Vocabulary in Eighth Graders at SMPN 06 KAUR.