

THE ABILITY OF THE FIRST YEARS STUDENTS IN MASTERING VOCABULARY AT SMP NEGERI 10 PALOPO

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Abstract

The objective of the research is to find out the ability of the first year students at SMP Neg. 10 palopo in mastering vocabulary. This research is descriptive research that will be analyzed qualitatively. It describes the ability of the students of SMP Negeri 10 Palopo in mastering vocabulary. The population of this research will be the first year students of SMP Negeri 10 Palopo. Findings of the research in vocabulary test shows that most of students got score in poor classification namely 21 and 7 got fairly poor. This fact implies that most of the student had low ability in vocabulary at SMPN 10 Palopo. Only 1 student got fairly and one got fairly good. No one got good, very good and excellent.

Keywords: ability, Mastering Vocabulary

BACKGROUND

Vocabulary as an aspect of language component plays a control role as a tool of communication. Vocabulary is a fundamental need. Experienced teacher of English as a second language know the importance of words. The speakers or the writers use in their speech or texts. The mastery of vocabulary is a difficult task to do, especially English vocabulary is complex. This complexity brings difficulties probably caused by the word form and various meaning. Certainly there are many approaches that can help students to improve and master the English vocabulary, and the students can choose one to help them in learning vocabulary.

Vocabulary is considered playing a central role, because through vocabulary we can communicate ideas, emotions and desires. Furthermore, by a good command of vocabulary on language, someone can express his/her ideas effectively and efficiently. Students always feel difficult in speaking not only because of their fewer attitudes toward the importance of acquiring of process the powerful vocabulary itself but also vocabulary. Vocabulary is not a simple matter,

because learning thousand of words by heart make the students bore, that why the aim of acquiring and having sufficient vocabulary cannot be reached.

The best way for themselves is increasing the motivation in learning vocabulary, because it is useful not only for the present but also for the future time. One way to create a good atmosphere in the classroom is using various techniques, methods and strategies.

Vocabulary is all the words that a person knows or used, all the words in a language, list the words with their meanings, especially in a book for learning foreign language. (Bull 2008 : 495). Webster Dictionary (1935:1073) states vocabulary is "A list or collection of words usually alphabetically arranged and explained or lexicon, stock of words use in language or by class, individual, etc. Vocabulary is an important thing in learning language. It would be impossible to learn a language without knowing vocabulary. Vocabulary is one of the components of language and that no language exists without words. More words we know, more ideas we can explore. So, we can communicate the ideas effectively.

Vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read, and write. Without an extensive vocabulary and strategies for acquiring new vocabulary, learners often achieve less than their potential and may be discouraged from making use of language learning. Research on vocabulary in recent years has done a great deal to clarify the levels of vocabulary learning learners need to achieve in order to read both simplified and unsimplified materials and to process different kind of oral and written texts, as well as the kinds of strategies learners use in understanding, using, and remembering words. (Richards and Renandya, 2002:255). Richards and Renandya (2002:256) state that: 3000 to 5000 words suggested for learners continuing to tertiary education studies.

Hornby (1974 : 959) states that vocabulary is total numbers of words of language, which are learned so thoroughly that they become a part of child's understanding, speaking, reading , and letter writing. According to Haywood and Sparkers (1984 : 1255) , Vocabulary is a list or collection of words used in a

language, science, book, etc. usually arranged in alphabetical order, and explained, a word – book.

Vocabulary is a fundamental of language furthermore; it is also important thing in learning English because it is impossible to learn a language without knowing the vocabularies. Through vocabulary we can convey our idea, emotion, and desires. More vocabularies are known the more so, we can explore our ideas effectively. Oxford learner's pocket dictionary, new edition (1995) states that vocabulary is the total number of word in a language, words known to a person; the of a here year old, last of words with their meanings, especially at the back of for teaching a foreign language.

Vocabulary is all the words that a person knows or uses, all the words in a language, list of words with their meanings especially learning a foreign language. Long man (1987) defines that vocabulary is a list of words in alphabetical order and with explanation of their meaning, less complete than dictionary.

Harmer (1981;154) states that vocabulary is seen as incidental to the main purpose of language teaching, namely the acquisition of grammatical knowledge about the language. Vocabulary is necessary to give students something to hang on to when learning structure, but is frequently not a focus for learning itself. Based on definitions above, the researcher concludes that vocabulary is all words which have a meaning and it is used in language especially in writing, reading, listening, and also to speak with others

Function words are those that often have little meaning in the dictionary sense but which serve important functions in relating other words in the language to each other. Example: are, is, at, to, which, for, by, he, etc. Content word name and describe the infinite number of thing, person, events and processes that speakers of English want to talk about. Some of them (after, man, eat, drink, house), Harmer (1991: 35) states that content words can be derived into three general classes: (a) Words naming things, ideas, entities. (b) Words naming actions. (c) Words used to describe the qualities of those things or actions.

Teaching vocabulary is an important part of language and it must be done carefully. English teacher should know which words will not be useful to the students. Useful words are the word that occurs frequently in everyday English. To select the important vocabulary, means that the teacher or instructor should

choose the actual words that can be used by the students. In this case, before teaching it, the teacher should select the vocabulary students need. Vocabulary for beginners, middle, and intermediate the teacher or instructor should choose what vocabulary the students need.

Harmer (1991: 30) states that a general principle of vocabulary selection has been that of frequency. We can decide which words we should teach on the basis of how frequently they are used by speakers of the language. The words which are most commonly used are the ones we should teach first. Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that when teaching vocabulary it must be related to the students need by considering their level/age, environment and anything that relate to their words. May the students like to study by , games, role play, singing or song, etc. (Harmer, 2004:37).

This research is focused on the description of students' ability in mastering vocabulary. This will be a good contribution to the teacher as basic information in preparing vocabulary teaching. Then, for the students as feedback for their ability in mastering vocabulary.

METHOD

This research is descriptive research that will be analyzed qualitatively. It describes the ability of the students of SMP Negeri 10 Palopo in mastering vocabulary. The population of this research will be the first year students of SMP Negeri 10 Palopo. There are three classes. Comprises : class A 53 students, class B 53 students, and class C 54 students. The total number of students are 160 students. As the number of population of this research was big. Therefore the writer will use random sampling technique. She will take 30 students randomly to represent the total number of population. In this case, the writer will take 10 students from each class. Instrument used in collecting data from the students will be vocabulary test. The test is intended to find out the students competence in the using vocabulary.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the research reveal description of the result of data analysis about the ability of the first year's students in mastering vocabulary at SMP Negeri 10 Palopo. Then, discussions part explains more about the result of this research. It can be seen at table below:

Table 1. score in vocabulary test

NO	STUDENTS	THE RESULTS OF : VOCABULARY TEST
1	ANA	3,3
2	ADT	6.6
3	AM	4.6
4	ANS	5
5	AJ	2
6	BS	2.6
7	DA	2.6
8	DW	1.3
9	EP	4
10	ES	1.3
11	FY	3
12	FS	3
13	GED	4
14	HR	1.6
15	HF	2.6
16	IF	0.6
17	MA	0.3
18	HR	1.6
19	MU	2
20	NP	5.6
21	NF	0.6
22	NA	4.3
23	PL	4.6
24	ARS	3.6
25	RM	1.6
26	RA	2.6
27	SM	3.6
28	SN	2
29	ST	4.3
30	TM	4
Total		90.8
Mean		3.03

Table above shows the result of vocabulary test. The mean score is 3.03. Then, the next table shows about the classification of students' score:

Classification	Vocabulary Test
Excellent (9.6-10)	0
Very Good (8.6-9.5)	0
Good (7.6-8.5)	0
Fairly Good (6.6-7.5)	1
Fairly (5.6-6.5)	1
Fairly Poor (3.6-5.5)	7
Poor (0-3.5)	21

Based on the comparison table above, we can see that in vocabulary Test, most of students got score in poor classification namely 21 and 7 got fairly poor. This fact implies that most of the student had low ability in vocabulary at SMPN 10 Palopo. Only 1 student got fairly and one got fairly good. No one got good, very good and excellent.

CONCLUSION

In the preceding part of this chapter, we have observed the students' ability in learning vocabulary. The students' score in doing the test can be observed in Table 1. the mean score of the students is 3.03, fails into poor category.

In connection with the students' achievement in learning vocabulary, it can be said that it needs to be improved by developing the technique and method in learning and teaching vocabulary.

The teacher of English should always give more attention to the students' mastery on vocabulary. The most important thing in this case is giving them motivation in memorizing vocabulary.

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