

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. Theoretical Framework**

##### **2.1.1. Vocabulary**

Learning a new language cannot be separated from vocabulary. Meaning that in learning a new language people have to know its vocabulary. McCarthy (1990:viii) asserts that effective communication in a second language is unachievable in a meaningful manner, regardless of the student's grasp of grammar or mastery of second language sounds, if they lack the vocabulary to convey a diverse array of meanings.

According to Zhang (2009:33), vocabulary pertains to the terms taught within a foreign language. Furthermore, as per Nation (2006:8), vocabulary items are not simply a dull list of words that necessitate memorization; instead, they play a central role in meaningful, contextual language usage. Scarcella (2009) also asserts that grasping a word entails comprehending its frequency of occurrence, its companions in usage, its appropriateness across various contexts, its syntactic behavior, its inherent form and derivations, its word associations, and its semantic attributes. Based on the aforementioned definitions, it can be deduced that vocabulary mastery involves a comprehensive grasp of all the words within a language, signifying a complete aptitude to comprehend the repertoire of words and their meanings within a specific language.

Vocabulary can be defined in various ways. Vocabulary refers to the collection of words available to a speaker or writer. It encompasses all the words within a language, including specific words and phrases used in various dialects, registers, and specialized terminologies. Hebert and Kamil (2005, p. 3) define, vocabulary refers

to the understanding of word meanings. The term 'vocabulary' encompasses a variety of interpretations. Along the lines of Hebert and Kamil statement, Spencer (1992) highlighted that the most crucial skill for a reader or writer to acquire is vocabulary mastery. This involves familiarizing oneself with words pertinent to a particular field of expertise, alongside a well-organized collection of words akin to a dictionary, accompanied by concise and lucid definitions.

Vocabulary is crucial for developing proficiency in reading, speaking, writing, and listening. Insufficient vocabulary hampers effective communication and the ability to express thoughts and emotions both orally and in written form. Richards and Renandya (2002, p. 255) write their idea about vocabulary in general terms, as follows:

vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how learners speak, listen, read and write. Without an extensive vocabulary and strategies for acquiring new vocabulary, learners often achieve their potential and may be discouraged from making use of language learning opportunities around them such as listening to the radio, listening to the native speaker, using language in different context, reading or watching television.

Lubliner & Scott (2008:7) outline vocabulary as the complete array of words (along with their meanings and regulations for their combination) that constitute a language. Meanwhile, according to Burn

& Broman (2007:4), vocabulary refers to the assortment of words employed by individuals, groups, or professionals, all sharing similarities yet maintaining distinct differences. The fundamental aspect of language acquisition is acquiring a robust vocabulary. Consequently, achieving success in English language learning necessitates the acquisition of vocabulary. This notion is also supported by Zimmerman (2006:60), who emphasizes that teaching vocabulary is vital in foreign language education, as effective

communication relies on a diverse lexicon. These statements collectively underscore the significance of imparting vocabulary instruction in the context of learning a foreign language.

In addition to possessing an extensive vocabulary, it would be advantageous to possess adept usage skills. The definitions of words frequently encompass numerous and intricate aspects. Therefore, English teachers must consider this aspect when instructing vocabulary to their students. Proficient English language teachers are acutely aware of the pivotal role vocabulary plays (Allen, 1983). Furthermore, they recognize that students should attain proficiency in the multitude of words employed by English speakers and writers.

Vocabulary holds significance for both teachers and learners when acquiring a new language. Proficiency in vocabulary significantly influences an individual's understanding of written or spoken content. A robust vocabulary enables easy comprehension of the concepts conveyed by an author in written texts and the information presented in spoken messages.

### **2.1.2. The Importance of Vocabulary**

For individuals learning English as both a foreign and second language, vocabulary acquisition holds substantial significance. Tozcu and Coady (2004: 473) emphasize the critical role of vocabulary acquisition in the realm of language learning and academic achievement, as it substantially contributes to reading comprehension and proficiency. Furthermore, Heubener (1965: 88) underscores that vocabulary acquisition hinges on the establishment of specific habits. Given that this process involves connecting symbols with their meanings, it's evident that augmenting a word's meaning is equally vital as its frequent repetition.

In addition, according to Grauberg (1997: 15) the process of learning vocabulary involves four stages:

a. Discrimination

This is the basic step. It involves the ability to distinguish sounds, letters from those next to them, and from the sounds and letters of similar words when listening and reading; to keep them distinct when speaking and writing. As will be seen later, failure to discriminate is a frequent source of error.

b. Understanding meaning

This means understanding the concept of the foreign word or phrase. Often this is straightforward because the word can be related to its referent by direct association or because there is equivalent word in English.

c. Remembering

The next step after introducing and explaining new material is to ensure its retention. Once learners have found out the meaning of a word, they have no reason to attend to it any more, and it will be forgotten.

d. Consolidation and extension of meaning

Learning new words is not an instantaneous process if it were, and if presentation were the only critical variable involved, then words would not be forgotten and need to be relearned. This means in order to ensure the long-term retention and recall, words or lexical items need to be put to work, or into practice as it is often understood in many other contexts.

### **2.1.3. Teaching English Vocabulary for Young Learners**

Young learners refer to children who are enrolled in formal schooling from the age of 5 or 6, typically until the age of 11 or 12. They possess distinct characteristics that set them apart from adult learners. Teaching English Vocabulary to young learner is different from adult people. The young learners need to get English vocabulary from early ages. When it comes to instructing vocabulary to young

learners, teachers, must be aware of the necessary preparations prior to entering the classroom.

The key attributes of young learners center on their proclivity for being active, although this varies among individuals, with some being more active than others. Teachers should be attentive to children who exhibit either an overly passive or excessively active demeanor. Another noticeable trait among children is their heightened level of activity coupled with a natural curiosity. Young language learners possess the capacity to exert some control over their learning and hold specific preferences about activities they enjoy or dislike (Penny McKay, 2009). Children tend to grasp other languages more effectively than adults, a factor often cited in support of introducing foreign language education early. Ellis (2014) outlines that young learners typically refer to those in primary or elementary school within the education system. Unlike adults, who can dedicate prolonged hours to a subject, children can sustain their attention for only around 15 to 20 minutes.

These preparations typically include creating a lesson plan, organizing teaching aids, and various other tasks. While each teacher may have their unique approach to teaching English, they generally follow similar methods employed by others. Because during the teaching and learning process, teachers frequently encounter diverse descriptions of learners' types and styles. Each student possesses varying levels of English language proficiency compared to their peers. Even when students are grouped according to different levels, it is not guaranteed that everyone within a particular group will possess the same level of English proficiency.

Wallace (2007:207) explains that teaching vocabulary should consider these following factors:

a. Aims

The aim of teaching vocabulary is to make the teacher easy to formulate the materials, which will be taught to the students.

b. Quantity

The teacher has to decide the number of vocabulary items to be learned. The learners will get confuse or discouraged if they get many new words. Therefore, the teacher should select new words, which can easy to understand by the learners.

c. Need

In teaching vocabulary, the teacher has to choose the words really needed by the students in communication.

d. Frequent exposure and repetition

Frequent exposure and repetition here means that the teacher should give much practice on repetition so that the students master the target words well. They also give opportunity to the students to use words in writing or speaking.

e. Meaningful presentation

In teaching vocabulary the teacher should present targetwords in such a way that the meaning of the target words are perfectly clear and unambiguous.

f. Situation and presentation

The teachers tell the students that they have to use the words appropriately. The use of words depends on the situation in

which they are used and depends on the person to whom they are speaking.

According to Hatch (1995, p. 373-390), there are five essential steps in vocabulary learning. The first step involves encountering new words, as it is crucial for learners to have exposure to a variety of vocabulary sources. Reading is an obvious means of encountering words, but watching television and listening to the radio can also contribute to vocabulary acquisition. Dictionaries serve as valuable resources for encountering new words and discovering new meanings for familiar words. The second step in vocabulary learning is getting a clear understanding of the word form. Having a visual or mental image of the word's form is important, as it helps students recognize and differentiate between different word forms. The third step focuses on understanding word meanings. Strategies such as asking native English speakers for word definitions, creating mental images of word meanings, and seeking clarification by explaining concepts and requesting corresponding English words are helpful in this regard. Consolidating the connection between word form and meaning in memory is the fourth step. Various vocabulary learning drills, including flashcards, matching exercises, and crossword puzzles, can be employed to strengthen the association between the form and meaning of words. The final step in vocabulary learning is using the words actively. Applying newly learned words in meaningful ways, such as in conversations or writing, enhances language proficiency.

In the practice of English teaching especially teaching vocabulary for young learners, there could be issues, challenges, or difficulties. Beltrán (2001) endeavored to explore certain issues related to teaching vocabulary, including the inability to identify incorrectly taught vocabulary, employing vocabulary devoid of meaning, erroneous dictionary usage, improper utilization of grammatical

structure, spelling errors, and inaccuracies in pronunciation or stress placement.

Meanwhile Thornbury (2002, p. 27) highlights several factors that contribute to the difficulties students encounter when learning certain words. Firstly, pronunciation poses a hurdle, as research suggests that words with complex pronunciations are often harder to grasp. Secondly, spelling and sound discrepancies lead to pronunciation and spelling errors, adding to the complexity of words. Thirdly, longer words and those with variable stresses in polysyllabic forms. Moreover, the overlapping meanings of words or multiple interpretations, as seen in words like "since" and "still," frequently cause confusion among learners. Lastly, the range of connotation and idiomatic usage plays a significant role, with words adaptable to various contexts generally perceived as easier, like "thin" compared to "skinny," "slim," or "slander." It is important to note that the connotation associated with specific words may also pose challenges, exemplified by "propaganda" having a negative connotation in English while its equivalent may simply mean "publicity." Recognizing and addressing these factors in vocabulary instruction can support learners in their language development journey.

Considering the ways to teach vocabulary, teachers can employ those techniques to engage students in the learning. According to Brewster, Ellis, and Girard (1992) cited in Alqahtani (2015), several effective techniques are recommended for teaching vocabulary. These techniques include utilizing objects such as visual aids, real-life items, and demonstrations to enhance students' memory of words. Drawing can also be employed as a means to facilitate understanding of vocabulary. The use of illustrations and pictures assists students in comprehending the meanings of unfamiliar words. Additionally, contrasting words helps elucidate their respective meanings.

Enumeration, where a group of related items are presented (e.g., explaining the word "clothes" by mentioning specific items like shirts, trousers, etc.), aids students in grasping the concept of the word. Gestures can be employed to make the lesson dynamic and engaging. Encouraging students to guess word meanings from context fosters independent learning. Finally, employing translation techniques when encountering incidental vocabulary and for checking students' comprehension is also recommended. These techniques contribute to effective vocabulary instruction, promoting better retention and understanding of words among students.

#### **2.1.4. Challenges Teaching English Vocabulary to Young learner**

In their 2020 article 'Challenges in Teaching English Vocabulary to Non-native Students,' Elhamdi, O. E. H., & Hezam, A. M. M. classify the challenges of teaching vocabulary into three distinct categories. The first category concerns the issues linked to students. The following category addresses challenges related to teachers. Lastly, the third category focuses on the challenges tied to methods, techniques, and strategies for teaching vocabulary. These three categories can be separately explained into points, one by one.:

##### **a. Challenges related to students.**

- 1) Language learners frequently express frustration over their rapid forgetting of new words.
- 2) Students encounter obstacles when attempting to embed vocabulary in their long-term memory.
- 3) Persistent challenges arise for students during testing.
- 4) Numerous students lack access to quality English education due to proficient instructors, financial limitations, absence of multimedia-based teaching methods, and the absence of English Language Clubs. Consequently, the task is to motivate young learners to

build foundational skills despite the lack of state-of-the-art facilities.

- 5) Students eagerly anticipate the translation of vocabulary by teachers into their native language (L1).
- 6) The foremost and most crucial challenge is that Arab students lack even fundamental English proficiency, despite being instructed in English within educational institutions.
- 7) Students hold high expectations of their teachers, viewing them as highly competent and believing that their teachers will facilitate rapid English learning.
- 8) The ability to employ communication strategies to convey messages effectively and compensate for limited knowledge of language rules.
- 9) Students swiftly lose interest when teachers employ outdated conventional teaching methods and techniques.

**b. Challenges related to teachers.**

- 1) Teachers face challenges in understanding how instructional programs can effectively foster the acquisition of a substantial vocabulary, despite recognizing its significance in language learning.
- 2) Useful techniques and activities for presenting vocabulary are essential aspects for teachers to consider in their teaching approach.
- 3) Teachers often fail to empower students within the classroom, hindering their confidence to spontaneously participate in diverse vocabulary activities and dampening their motivation to be confident risk-takers.

- 4) The lack of awareness among teachers in eliciting motivational vocabularies during teaching and learning sessions hinders learners' motivation in the classroom.
- 5) Teachers sometimes struggle to provide clear instructions that initiate tasks and prevent learners from becoming confused when working on vocabulary exercises.
- 6) A deficiency in continuous professional training on teaching methodologies contributes to various challenges observed within the classroom.
- 7) Possibly, insufficient attention is given by school teachers to the effective teaching of the English language.
- 8) Teachers should possess patience, competence, and intelligence to adeptly handle situations and achieve their teaching objectives.
- 9) Exploring student responses to different strategies used in learning and teaching English vocabulary is a valuable endeavor.
- 10) Addressing the issue of low attainment in second language (L2) vocabulary becomes an important consideration for educators.
- 11) Teachers have the opportunity to assess the efficacy of their vocabulary instruction by evaluating how well primary-grade students have absorbed the taught vocabulary.

**c. Challenges related to methods/techniques/ strategies of teaching vocabulary**

- 1) Language learning strategies that make vocabulary learning interesting and easy for learners, which can

help learners and offer influential teaching techniques and activities, which are of help to the teachers.

- 2) Vocabulary teaching was given little emphasis (both learners' and teachers' awareness to classroom vocabulary teaching/learning was relatively poor), teaching techniques that teachers used to teach learners do not seem to be successful in enhancing students' vocabulary use (less effective in encouraging them to do more on vocabulary activities in English classes).
- 3) Students and teachers' awareness on the importance of carrying out vocabulary activities in class through the contextual clue were low.
- 4) The study also revealed that ineffective grouping of students during vocabulary learning influences learners' vocabulary use and development because students feel less capable of participating in class when they were exposed to small groups.
- 5) The teaching methodologies and learning atmosphere.
- 6) School and English language department curricula, teaching methodology, lack of exposure to the target language in language teaching, lack of exposure to the target language as spoken by native speakers, and student attitudes and motivation.
- 7) Using pictures and audio-visual aids effectively in teaching vocabulary.
- 8) Teaching/Learning vocabulary is the core of teaching and learning foreign languages as learners cannot fully master the L2 skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing without having a highly advanced lexical competence.

- 9) Vocabulary is a powerful predictor and correlate of reading comprehension, and consequently of academic success.
- 10) The importance of using games in teaching vocabulary and in what way using them is helpful.
- 11) The success of integrating instructional technology in teaching and learning languages, and facilitating the use of technology in teaching languages.
- 12) Bridging the Gap between Receptive and Productive Vocabulary Size through Extensive Reading.
- 13) Possible evolution of some fruitful and compatible strategies in order to yield the maximum academic output.
- 14) The degree to which games, songs, and stories help increase primary school pupils' English vocabulary size and encourage learning in an intensive English course.
- 15) Exploring how different test techniques influence learners' performance on a vocabulary test.
- 16) Developing strategies for discovering the meaning of unknown words.
- 17) The linguistic aspect challenge when teaching vocabulary: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary mastery, and dialect.
- 18) The nonlinguistic challenge when teaching vocabulary: learners' ability, behavior and motivation, educational background, limited material and media, monotonous methods, society support, and limited time.
- 19) Building parents' involvement.

### **2.1.5. Previous Study**

There have been some previous studies related to the topic of the investigation that is the difficulties of teaching vocabulary. The first study was conducted by Alam (2009), The findings of this study indicated that several factors contributed to the challenges encountered in the teaching and learning of English vocabulary. These factors included the readiness of the students, the availability of appropriate learning sources, the utilization of effective learning strategies, the use of suitable media and teaching techniques, the quality of instructional materials, and the learning environment. Specifically, the difficulties were evident in areas such as pronunciation and spelling, as demonstrated by the materials provided. The researcher concluded that teaching English vocabulary to fifth-year students presented obstacles related to pronunciation, translation or comprehension of word meanings, spelling, and the ability to distinguish between different types of words.

Rahmawati (2015) conducted a study focusing on the challenges encountered in teaching vocabulary, particularly among young learners, including kindergarten students. The research revealed that both linguistic and non-linguistic problems were identified in the process. Linguistically, teachers faced difficulties in areas such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary proficiency, and dialect. On the other hand, non-linguistic issues encompassed students' abilities, behavior, and motivation, as well as the teachers' educational background, limited availability of materials and media, monotonous teaching methods, lack of societal support, and time constraints. The study concluded that these challenges could be addressed through various solutions targeting both linguistic and non-linguistic aspects.

The third studies conducted by Suardi & Sakti (2019), This research focuses on investigating the challenges faced by English teachers in teaching vocabulary. The study's scope was limited to

describing and exploring these difficulties encountered during vocabulary instruction. Firstly, they struggle with selecting appropriate vocabulary to teach due to the vast number of English words and variations in student abilities. Secondly, implementing teaching techniques and introducing new vocabulary poses challenges as students often fail to pay attention, create noise, and display passivity during vocabulary lessons. Lastly, reviewing and evaluating students' understanding of the taught words becomes challenging for teachers due to students' limited comprehension of vocabulary meanings.

Derakhshan & Shirmohamadi (2015) in their article titled "The Challenges of Instructing English Language: The Interplay of Research and Teaching," discovered that bridging the gap between research and teaching regarding difficulties in English language instruction involves the utilization of varied strategies for lesson planning. These strategies demonstrate adaptability to classroom dynamics, and students themselves possess effective techniques for learning the English language. Consequently, it's imperative for researchers and teachers to foster close collaboration in order to achieve optimal outcomes in both teaching and learning the English language, while simultaneously mitigating challenges associated with teaching it as a second or foreign language.

Irimiea (2016) in her article "English As a Foreign Language. What Challenges Do Teachers of English Face ?" explored three key suppositions: (1) students' diminished enthusiasm for English learning, (2) students' reduced focus during the learning process, and (3) the inadequacy of school facilities.