

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher discuss the introduction that consists of the background of the research, the scope of the study, the formula of the problem, the purpose of research, and the meaning of research.

A. Background of the Research

Language is a communication system consisting of symbols, whether in the form of voices, written words, or movements, used by humans to express themselves, interact, and share information. Languages include rules of grammar, syntax, morphology, and phonology that allow speakers to compose sentences and understand complex meanings.

According to Sapir (1921), language is also a cultural instrument that reflects the identity, values, and thinking of the people who use it. Through language, humans can transmit ideas, emotions, and knowledge from one generation to the next, enriching cultural and intellectual heritage. This definition emphasizes the function of language as a means of understanding the world and interacting with others. Communication through language involves not only spoken words but also writing, gestures, and other socially recognized symbols.

Learning languages involves mastering four main skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Each of these skills plays an important role in

the ability to communicate effectively in the target language. Listening is fundamental in the language learning process as it allows students to understand the oral speech, intonation, and context of the conversation. Active listening helps improve speech skills and overall understanding of the language. A comprehensive vocabulary mastery is crucial here, because the more words students know, the easier it is for them to understand and follow the conversation. Meanwhile, speaking is a productive skill that allows students to express their thoughts and ideas orally. Rich vocabulary allows students to speak more variably and effectively, express themselves better and cope with different communication situations.

Furthermore, reading is a receptive skill that helps students understand written texts. It involves understanding vocabulary, sentence structure, and cultural context in the text. A broad vocabulary is essential for understanding complex and varied texts, as well as helping in recognizing and learning new words. In addition, writing is a productive skill that allows students to express their ideas in writing. It covers grammar, spelling, paragraph structure, and text cohesion. Writing helps in crystallizing student understanding of language and improving critical thinking skills. Rich vocabulary allows students to write more creatively and convincingly, using the right words to describe their ideas in detail.

In the context of language learning, vocabulary includes the recognition, understanding, and use of words effectively to communicate. The importance of vocabulary in language learning cannot be ignored, as it is the basis of

language skills. Having a rich vocabulary enables one to understand the text read, listen to and understand the conversation, as well as express ideas clearly and effectively both orally and in writing. In other words, a good vocabulary helps improve speaking, writing, reading, and listening skills in the target language. Without proper vocabulary mastery, one will have difficulty mastering other aspects of the language. Therefore, vocabulary development has become one of the main focus on language teaching.

Vocabulary is a fundamental component in language learning, as it is the basis of effective communication skills. A good mastery of vocabulary enables students to understand the text read, listen to and understand the conversation, as well as express their ideas clearly and accurately both orally and in writing. Without adequate mastery, students will have difficulty mastering other language skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Therefore, vocabulary development becomes a major focus in language teaching, helping students to improve their understanding and overall communication skills.

The difficulty of students in learning vocabulary often ranges from several complex factors. One is the variation in learning styles that affects how students absorb and remember new words. Some students may be more responsive to visual learning methods, while others might be more effective through auditive or kinaesthetic approaches. In addition, difficulties can arise from the lack of practical opportunities to use new vocabulary in relevant communicative contexts, thus hindering their retention and understanding.

Other factors include low motivation, a lack of time spent learning vocabulary, as well as lack of understanding of effective learning strategies. Therefore, a diverse approach, giving a real context, as well as encouragement and support from teachers and learning environments can help overcome the difficulties of students in learning vocabulary effectively.

This research is not meant to ignore students' problems in terms of phonetic, grammatical, and other aspects. It is also not intended to make vocabulary the most influential factor in the mastery of a foreign language. Based on observations carried out by the researcher, it was found that for students of the first semester of English language education, learning vocabulary is still difficult.

Based on the above background, the researcher is interested in taking a study entitled “Difficulties in Learning Vocabulary Faced by the Students of the English Language Study Program at Khairun University”

B. Scope of the Research

This research focuses on students' difficulties in learning vocabulary in the English Language Study Program of Khairun University.

C. Statements of the Research

1. What are the difficulties faced by students in learning vocabulary?
2. What are the factors that contribute to students' difficulties in learning vocabulary?

D. Objective of the Research

1. To find out the difficulties faced by students in learning vocabulary.
2. To find out the factors that contribute to the students' difficulties in learning vocabulary.

E. Significance of the Research

1. Theoretical benefit

- a) The results of this research are expected to provide insights for the development of language teaching theory, especially regarding learning vocabulary.
- b) This research can enhance the theory related to the difficulties in learning vocabulary in the English Language Education Program at Khairun University.
- c) The findings of this research can be used as a reference for others interested in discussing difficulties in learning vocabulary.

2. Practical benefit

- a) Hopefully, this research provides benefits to researcher and aids the research process in education.
- b) The results of this research are expected to be valuable for students in the English Language Education Program at Khairun University.
- c) Last, this research aims to fulfil one of the requirements for the researcher to complete their undergraduate program in the Department of English Language Education, Faculty of Education, Khairun University.