

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher discusses background of the problem, identification of the problem, limitation of the problem, formulation of the problem, research questions, purpose of the research, significance of the research, and definition of key terms.

1.1 The Background of the Problem

In learning a foreign language, vocabulary plays an important role. It is one element that links the four language skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing all together. In order to communicate well in a foreign language, students should acquire an adequate number of words and should know how to use them accurately. The acquisition of vocabulary would help people in gaining, understanding, and also enhancing the process of knowledgeable transferred for a better life.

Vocabulary is a set of familiar words within a person's language because vocabulary has an important role for all language skills. In other words, the first thing that has to be mastered by language learners in learning language is vocabulary. In listening, student' vocabulary influences their understanding toward teacher's speech, class discussion, and other speeches. The words that they choose in speaking affect how well they deliver a message. In reading, students' vocabulary affects their ability to understand and comprehend a text. In addition, dealing with writing, students' vocabulary also influences how clear they convey their thought to the reader. In

conclusion, vocabulary takes an important role in equipping students to be able to communicate in English.

Vocabulary is one of language components which should be mastered by the students. Vocabulary is the important component and becomes the basic competence in order to master the language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. If the students have the knowledges of vocabulary, the students can apply the language skills easily. According to Rivers and Nunand in Alqahtani (2015: 2), vocabulary is essential for successful second language learners because without an extensive vocabulary, they will be unable to use the structures and functions they may have learned for comprehensible communications.

In English Department at Bung Hatta University vocabulary is one of the subjects that has to be learned. In vocabulary class, students study about understanding word meaning through antonym and synonym. Antonym is a word that has the exact opposite meaning of another word. While, synonym has the same meaning of another word. Therefore, catching meaning vocabulary through antonym and synonym is one of ability that students got in vocabulary class. The interview has been done to the second year students at English Department of Bung Hatta University on March, 4th2019. Based on the interview it was found that the students have learnt about catching meaning vocabulary through antonym and synonym in vocabulary class. The researcher also found that some of them were still confused about catching meaning vocabulary through antonym and synonym. For example, they said synonym (young: teen), but the other students said antonym correctly (fire:

water). In fact, the example above shows that the students did not understand to the antonym and synonym. So, the researcher is interested to conduct a research entitled “An Analysis of the Second Year Students’ Ability in Understanding Word Meaning through Antonym and Synonym at English Department of Bung Hatta University”

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Learning vocabulary is important because it is needed to speak, write, read, and listen the language accurately. The students have to use the appropriate word to express their ideas. So vocabulary can support their language skill. There are some problems appeared in understanding word meaning through antonym and synonym; the knowledge about their vocabularies, and how to differentiate between synonym and antonym semantically.

In vocabulary there are three parts of vocabulary; synonym, antonym, and homonym. Synonym is one of two or more words or expressions of the same language that have the same or nearly the same meaning in some or all senses. Antonym is a word that has the exact opposite meaning of another word. While, homonym is each of two or more words having the same spelling or pronunciation but different meanings and origins. In general, the students just learnt about synonym and antonym. Because in vocabulary, synonym and antonym are the common aspect for daily communication, synonym and antonym are important to be studied. Homonym is one of topic in Pronunciation class not in Vocabulary class.

There are two problems in understanding word meaning through antonym and synonym at English Department of Bung Hatta University. The first problems about their knowledge in vocabularies. The students have low level vocabulary, so in understanding word meaning antonym and synonym also have the low level. There are many impacts that will come when they do not have much vocabulary in their mind, for example: the students will have the limitation to express their ideas written and also spoken. In addition, their ability in four language skills will be weak. Mastering vocabulary is the foundation for all aspects as long as the students increasing their knowledge.

The second problem is about how to differentiate between synonym English and antonym English semantically. The students still confuse to differentiate the synonym and antonym, even though they understand about synonym and antonym Indonesian. It is because their capacity of vocabulary. In fact if they have many vocabularies in their mind, they can differentiate between synonym and antonym.

Vocabulary mastery is the intelligence in the language the always be the starting point of all language skills. This is the important thing that will make someone be able in using language in any situation. In this case, English language students need knowledge of the vocabulary to be used. Vocabulary is a list of words that have meaning.

Based on statement it can be concluded that students need to increase their vocabulary skill. It can help the students to improve their four skill also. And the students can differentiate between antonym and synonym English.

1.3 The Limitation of the Problem

Based on identification of the problem above, the researcher focused her study on an analysis of second year students' ability in understanding word meaning through antonym and synonym at English Department of Bung Hatta University.

The researcher describe the second year students' ability at English Department of Bung Hatta University because they have studied about synonym and antonym in Vocabulary class.

1.4 The Formulation of the Problem

In line with the limitation of the problem above, the researcher formulates the problem as "How is the second year students' ability in understanding word meaning through antonym and synonym at English Department of Bung Hatta University?".

1.5 The Research Questions

Based on the formulation of the problem, the researcher formulates the research question as follows;

1. How is the second year students' ability in understanding word meaning through antonym at English Department Bung Hatta University?.
2. How is the second year students' ability in understanding word meaning through synonym at English Department Bung Hatta University?.

1.6 The Purposes of the Research

In the line with formulation of the problem and research question, the main purpose of this study is to describe the students' ability in understanding word meaning through antonym and synonym. The specific purposes of this research are follows :

1. To find out the second year students' ability in understanding word meaning through antonym at English Department of Bung Hatta University
2. To find out the second year students' ability in understanding word meaning through synonym at English Department of Bung Hatta University

1.7 The Significance of the Research

The researcher hopes that this study is helpful for the lecturers at the second year students at English Department of Bung Hatta University. The lecturer can get the useful information about the second year students' ability of Bung Hatta University in understanding word meaning through antonym and synonym. For the students, they know their ability in understanding word meaning through antonym and synonym. By having known the result, the student will have more motivation to improve their ability. Finally the researcher expects that her research will be useful for the next researcher as a reference.

1.8 The Definition of Key Terms

In order to avoid misconception about this research, here are the key terms mostly used in this research:

1. Ability is to use the correct form and understand about English antonym and synonym.
2. Vocabulary is one of language components which should be mastered by the students.
3. Antonym is a word that has the exact opposite meaning of another word.
4. Synonym is a word that has the exact same meaning of another word.