

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. Comprehension

Understanding, or comprehension is the basic skill of reading. What is the point of any activity if there is no understanding? We learn through reading, by adding to what we know already. Comprehension and learning are fundamentally the same, relating the new to the already known. To understand all of this, we have to begin by comprehending comprehension.

Comprehension means relating what we do not know, or new information, to what we already know. Which is not a random collection of facts but a “theory of the world” each of our heads called “cognitive structure”.¹

Basic abilities of all types of comprehension include²

1. Selecting the appropriate meaning for words
2. Grouping words into thought units
3. Sensing sentence meaning and organization
4. Sensing paragraph meaning and organization
5. Understanding the interrelationships among the parts of a selection so that the whole can be understood.

¹ Fraida Dubin, David E. Eskey. *Teaching Second Language Reading for Academic Purposes*, (Massachusetts: Addison Wesley Publishing Company, 1986), p.6

² L Bond. Guy and Eva Bond Wagne. *Teaching the Child to Read*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1980), p.15

A psycholinguistic analysis of reading and learning to read state that comprehension may be regarded as relating relevant aspect of the world around Us- written language in the case of reading – to the knowledge, intentions, and expectation we already have in our heads.³

From the definition above we can conclude that comprehension is relating new information that we already know.

1. The Reading Comprehension

Comprehension is the central and essential process in reading activities. In fact, reading is associated with comprehending. It is said by Gipe “the heart of the reading process is comprehension or understanding what is read”.⁴

In addition, Hudson states that comprehension skills represent the ability to use context and knowledge to derive meaning from what is read.⁵ Therefore, the students should improve their reading comprehension skill. This skill separates an active reader and a passive reader. An active reader uses a great deal of context to interpret words and sentences while processing text.

³ Frank Smith. *Understanding Reading: A Psycholinguistic Analysis of Reading and Learning to Read*, (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1994), p.7

⁴ Gipe, Joan P. *Corrective Reading Techniques. For the Classroom Teacher* (Second Ed.). (Arizona: Gorsuch Scarisbick Publishers, 1991),p.118

⁵ Hudson, T. *Teaching Second Language Reading*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p.79

Hudson states, active readers were not only read the text but they also interact with the text. The reading comprehension skills increase the pleasure and effectiveness of reading. The key of reading comprehension skills is the students both decoding the text and interacting with it. Reading comprehension skills increase the pleasure and effectiveness of reading. Strong reading comprehension skills help the students in all the other subjects and in the personal and professional lives on their future.

Reading comprehension is the most basic purpose of reading, underlying and supporting most other purposes for reading, and also more complex than commonly assumed. It is not essentially different from other kinds of comprehension which depends on knowledge.

However, students as beginning readers often find difficulties to comprehend the reading text. There are some factors influence students as beginning reader to comprehend the text. Furthermore, teachers play important role to encourage the students to be success as an active reader. Hudson proposes list of variables that will differentially affect success in reading⁶. For instance: 1) grapheme recognition, 2) phonological representation, 3) syntactic structure, 4) background knowledge, 5) processing strategies, 6) text structure understanding, 7) vocabulary, and 8) context of the reading act.

⁶ Hudson, T. *Teaching Second Language Reading*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). p.25

From the variables proposed above, vocabulary plays an important role in the success of the students' reading comprehension.

B. Vocabulary

1. Definition of Vocabulary

As a part of teaching-learning as foreign language, vocabulary cannot be simply defined as a group of words. Some experts have interpreted the meaning of vocabulary in different points of view. Vocabulary is the component of language that is concerned with words and meanings. All languages have words. Some words can be used in a wide variety of circumstances, but on others much more limited use. Nation and Nunan state that words are clearly vocabulary which is a very important part of language learning.⁷ The most useful English vocabulary depends on the goal of the learners. It is almost 1000 words family of English. Around 75 percent of the running words is used in academic text and newspaper, 80 percent in novels, and about 85 percent in conversation. It contains most of 176 function word families.

In addition, Richards and Renandya state vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provide much of the basis for how

⁷ David Nunan. *Practical English Language Teaching*. First Edition. (New York: McGraw-Hill, Companies, Inc, 2003). p.135

well learners speak, listen, read and write.⁸ It means that learning vocabulary is important as a part of learning English or other foreign languages since learners learn vocabulary first before they master a more complex structure.

Harmer stated we learn without grammar very little can be conveyed, if we learn without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.⁹ We can say almost anything with words with very little grammar. Most learners acknowledge the importance of vocabulary knowledge. Learning is the process and acquisition is the end result of vocabulary development. Brown stated that the best internalization of vocabulary comes from encounters with the words within the context of surrounding discourse.¹⁰ Lexical forms now play a central role in the contextualized meaningful language. The learners are guided in a specific way to internalize these important blocks of language. They see vocabulary as being an important part of language learning. And the most useful vocabulary depends on the goals of the learners.

According to Nation stated that academic vocabulary is consist of word families that occur frequently across a wide range of academic

⁸ Richard J.C and W.A renandya. *Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).p.255

⁹ Jeremy Harmer. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*: 3rd edition. (Malaysia: Longman, 2002) p.13

¹⁰ Brown H. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. (USA: Longman, 2007) p.13

subjects. It is a formal vocabulary.¹¹ The academic vocabulary is used in academic texts and academic activities. Learning specialized vocabulary is just one aspect of the main goal being able to function well in a specialized area.

Harmer says that if we want to describe how we feel at this very moment we have to be able to find a word which reflects the complexity of our feeling. Besides, by a good command of vocabulary or language, one can express ideas effectively and efficiently. Another definition of vocabulary, like by Barnhart, he states that vocabulary is stock of words used by person, class of people, profession, etc.¹² Actually vocabulary is more complex, vocabulary knowledge is not only knowing the words and its meanings, but also knowing about how the words sound and how the words are used in the context.

Cameron says building up a useful vocabulary is central to the learning of a foreign language at primary level. People who have a lot of vocabulary of foreign languages, she or he could learn language easily.¹³ Since vocabulary is all about words, and good knowledge of vocabulary

¹¹ Nation, I.S.P. *Learning vocabulary in another language*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) p.125

¹² Barnhart, Chyntia A. *The Facts on File Student's Dictionary of American English*. (United States: Facts on File Inc, 2008).

¹³ Cameron, L. *Teaching languages to young learners*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). p.72

helps someone understand language. It is supported by Wallace says that vocabulary is one of the most important parts of languages.¹⁴ It is because when speaking a language, the speakers need several words to convey ideas. Therefore, people can understand what the speakers mean. When a learner thinks about learning a foreign language, he or she has to learn the vocabulary of the foreign language first.

In conclusion, the researcher can summarize that vocabulary is the core component of language proficiency and all the words that are known and used by a person in a language, completed with their meanings and the meanings are used depend on the context.

2. Aspects of Vocabulary

The concept of a word can be defined in various ways, but there are significant aspects teachers need to be aware of and focus on. Based on Brown mentions the vocabulary consists of several aspects.¹⁵ There are meaning, spelling, pronunciation, word classes, and word use. The students should master all of the aspects of vocabulary in order that they can communicate well in English.

¹⁴ Wallace, Michael J. *Action Research for Language Teachers*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.186

¹⁵ Brown H. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. (USA: Longman, 2007), p.19

1. Meaning

When using a word in different context, it may have more than one meaning. In order to discover the meaning, the teacher can use ways such as guided discovery, contextual guesswork and using dictionaries.

2. Spelling

Spelling is important because it aids in reading when learning vocabulary. Spelling there may be different acceptable written forms for the same words within the same variety of English or most commonly, due to the fact that they belong to different varieties between many British and American English terms.

3. Pronunciation

Pronunciation is how words are pronounced. Pronunciation of words is not related to the spelling so it is difficult to be learnt. Good pronunciation helps the receiver easier to communicate.

4. Word Classes

Word classes are categories of word. Grammatical patterns should be practiced fluently to the students such as nouns (countable and uncountable), verb complementation, phrasal verbs, adjectives and adverb. The classification of the words of a language in this way depends on their function in communication. Nouns can occur in certain places of sentences

and serve certain functions. Verbs also occur in certain places and have special function, so word class membership is an important lexical feature.

5. Word Use

Word use is how a word, concept or phrase is used in a language. Word use may be also affected by grammar and thus be the subject of profound analysis.

In addition, vocabulary or phrases are split into two categories of usable terms and material:¹⁶

a. Words Functional

Functional words are primarily used to communicate grammatical functions

b. The Words of Content

The words of content are used to express cultural content and consist of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs that making up the lagers part of vocabulary. Such as translation of literay passage, antonym/synonym, use word in sentences and composition

3. Importance of Vocabulary

Holi Ali shows, a dictionary is an important educational tool that plays a vital role in various processes of language learning including reading

¹⁶ Widjaja, Grace.. *Complete English Grammar and the Exercises* (Salatiga: PT Buana Ilmu Populer). 2002. p. 11

comprehension and vocabulary learning and acquisition.¹⁷ In EFL learning situations, as language learners come across an unknown word, one of the possible strategies they think of and resort to is consulting a dictionary. The matter of what sort of dictionaries to use in the foreign language classroom has always been an on-going controversial issue. With regard to the use of a dictionary in second language and concerning other perspectives of dictionary utilize in terms of advantages.

Wallace mentions two main reasons about the importance of vocabulary.¹⁸ First, language exists in two forms, spoken and written and both of them need vocabulary to develop the existence itself. Second, vocabulary is needed for production in learning English as a foreign language rather than only needed for recognition.

Additionally, Cameron also states word knowledge consists of two.¹⁹ First, receptive vocabulary includes words that are recognized when we hear or see them. This ability is to comprehend passive vocabulary which is used in reading and listening context. Last, productive vocabulary includes words that are recognized when we speak or write. This is an active ability which is used in speaking or writing. Then, knowing and understanding words mean

¹⁷ Hodi Ali, H. I. Monolingual Dictionary Use in an EFL Context. *English Language Teaching*, 5(7), 2012. p 3

¹⁸ Wallace, Michael J. *Action Research for Language Teachers*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.186

¹⁹ Cameron, L. *Teaching languages to young learners*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). p.187

knowing their form (how they sound, how they spelt, grammatical change that could be made to them) and their meaning (their conceptual content and how relate to other words are and in particular types of language use).

In sum, vocabulary is acquired to different degrees and the development of a rich vocabulary is an important element in the acquisition of a second language. It is important to learn vocabulary to reach fluent in writing and communication.

C. Electronic Dictionary

1. Definition of Electronic Dictionary

Electronic dictionary is a dictionary whose data exists in digital form and can be accessed through a number of different media. Nesi also says the term electronic dictionary (or ED) can be used to refer to any reference material stored in electronic form that gives information about the spelling, meaning, or use of words.²⁰ Thus, spelling checkers in word processing programs, devices that translate printed words, glossaries for online teaching materials, or electronic versions of respected hard dictionaries are all ED types, which are characterized by the same storage system and retrieval.

The development of new technology and the Internet has progressively changed the dictionary concept. Electronic dictionaries can be

²⁰ Hilary Nesi. *The Use and Abuse of EFL Dictionaries*. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2000), p.55

found in several forms, including software installed on tablets or desktop computers, cellular applications, web applications, and built-in ereader functions. They may be free or require payment.

Nesi examined the benefits of EDs and stated that various types of electronic dictionaries offer audio and visual information and exercises in multimedia format²¹. In fact, the rich information offered by these dictionaries is such that it makes them a reference tool which not only provides information on various aspects of vocabulary knowledge but also serves as a language learning device. Laufer and Hill point out that the high speed and the ease of access of electronic dictionaries encourage the language learners to make frequent use of them in the process of vocabulary learning.²² They go on to make a significant point that using ED increases the chance of acquiring the look-up words.

Electronic dictionary can potentially contribute to language learning and instruction. Al-Jarf says that over and above the fact that electronic dictionaries play a significant role in vocabulary learning, they also have

²¹ Hilary Nesi. *The Use and Abuse of EFL Dictionaries*. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2000), p.370

²² Laufer, Batia and Monica Hill. What lexical information do L2 learners select in a CALL dictionary and how does it affect word retention? *Language Learning and Technology*, 2000,) p. 58

positive effects on motivation of language learners²³. It is the truth that learners learn more vocabularies when the practice of vocabulary learning is interesting and appealing. He also illustrated that those students who enjoyed vocabulary learning through the use of electronic dictionaries had the highest gains in vocabular

²³ Reima Al-Jarf. *Teaching Articles for the Profession. Edition: Vol 22. Chapter: Online Instruction and Creative Writing by Saudi EFL Freshman Students.*(Asian EFL Journa, 2007l),p.1