

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Basic Concepts of Vocabulary

2.1.1. Definition

There are many definitions of vocabulary used in linguistics. According to Webster's new world college dictionary (1998) vocabulary is a list of words and often, phrases, abbreviations, inflectional forms, etc., usually arranged in alphabetical order and defined or otherwise identified, as in a dictionary or glossary. In Cambridge International dictionary of English (1995) explain that vocabulary is defined as all the words used by a particular person or all words which exist in a particular language or subject.

Foreman (1996:451) notes vocabulary is a stock of words used by language, class, individual. Another definition has been proposed by Santrock (1998:317) who states that vocabulary is one of the most significant aspects of language development. Vocabulary can stand for or symbolize things. We use vocabulary to refer to objects, people, actions, events and even abstract ideas. Richard and Rodgers (1991:32) claim that vocabulary is one of the most important aspects of foreign language learning. Vocabulary also gives more emphasis on reading skills as the goal of foreign language study. Thus, vocabulary has a great position in learning especially foreign language.

Vocabulary is viewed as "the total numbers of words that make up a language" (Hornby, 1985:1425). Moreover, vocabulary also plays an important role in communication and language learning. In this line with this, Hart (1967:9) states that vocabulary or words are not only the principal means of communication, but also the tools that are used to think and express one self.

2.1.2. Types of Vocabulary

Similar to vocabulary definitions, there have been many and even different classifications of vocabulary. According to Shepherd (1987) there are two kinds of vocabularies, namely expressive vocabulary and receptive vocabulary. Expressive vocabulary refers to the words someone uses when he/she speaks or writes, that is when he/she expresses his/her thought to others. In contrast, receptive vocabulary refers to the words someone knows when he/she listens or reads, the words he/she knows when he/she receives thoughts from the others.

De Gregory (1971) proposes a different classification. He divides words of language into two groups: function words and content words or lexical words. Function words are words that must be learned in connection with use in the sentence and which are limited in number. This kind of words cannot be studied solely but must be studied in a full sentence. The second type is content or lexical words. They are words of which the meaning is recorded in dictionaries and often stated by means of definition, synonym, antonym and contextual explanation. It means that we can look for the meanings of this kind of words in the dictionary.

Content words can be learned in small group around life situation (Finocchiaro, 1974: 40). With specific reference to children, Norton (1980:296) states that children have four types of vocabularies. They include:

1. Listening Vocabulary. This is the first type of vocabulary that children acquire in learning language. It develops earlier than speaking vocabulary since before one is able to speak a language; he has to listen to the language first. The number of words a child responds when he hears them is also larger than that a child uses when speaking. Regarding this view of child vocabulary development, Saville-Troike (1976:14) points out that a child never acquires a language until he hears it.
2. Speaking Vocabulary. After acquiring listening vocabulary, one will use it to speak. This vocabulary is called speaking vocabulary.
3. Reading Vocabulary. When one reads a text, he will know more about words. Those words are not found by him in some of time in listening or even in speaking. All words which one gets from reading are called reading vocabulary.
4. Writing Vocabulary. This is the last type of vocabulary that one has in a certain language because writing is the last skill in language learning. The words used in writing are always fewer in number than those used in listening, speaking or reading vocabulary.

Another classification is provided by Hurlock (1978:172) who says that when acquiring a language, children learn two kinds of vocabularies: general vocabulary and special vocabulary (phrasal words). The general vocabulary consists of such words as "man", "nice" and "go", which can be used in a variety of different situations. On the other hand, the special vocabulary consists of words with specific meanings that can be used only in certain situations. Since words in the general vocabulary are the ones that are used most, they are learned first. At every age, the general vocabulary is larger than the special vocabulary.

2.1.3. The Importance of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the most important factor in learning a language either as a native language or as a foreign language. Therefore, if people want to communicate with others, we must master their language especially the vocabularies of the language. Hart (1967:9) says that vocabulary or words are not only the principal means of communication, but also the tools that are used to think and to express one self. Moreover, (Finocchiaro, 1969:8) says that the mastery of vocabulary cannot be ignored in the development of the four aspects of communication, namely: understanding, speaking, reading, and writing. Martin (1977:87) also states that people primarily communicate by using words; they can come into contact with words. They might have no success if they do not master words that are needed to express themselves.

According to Saville-Troike (1976:87) vocabulary is important for understanding and knowing names for things, actions and concepts. Vocabulary is in the first level in comprehending a language because when we learn a new language, what we have to know first is the words in that language. Moreover, Saville-Troike adds that for most learners of English there is a primary need in learning vocabulary. It is obvious that vocabulary plays an important role in mastering a language.

Vocabulary is important because it helps the students master a language. One who masters enough vocabularies will find fewer difficulties than those who have fewer vocabularies. Long and Richard (1987:30) recommend that ESL/EFL students who plan to read anything of substance in English need to acquire as large a vocabulary as possible. On the other hand, those who work are lack of vocabulary will face many problems. Mastery of vocabulary will be useful for the process of achieving language teaching objectives that is the mastery of language skills (reading, listening, writing and speaking).

Another reason why vocabulary is important especially for foreign language learners is pointed out by Saville-Troike (1976:65) “the ability to understand the target language greatly depends on one’s knowledge of vocabulary”. Thus, when you want to be able to master the language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) of a foreign language, what you have to do first is try to enrich your knowledge in vocabulary.

2.2. The Teaching of Vocabulary

Many ways can be used to teach vocabulary. Nation (1980: 18) states there are two ways of teaching vocabulary. The first is teaching vocabulary from a list of words and the second is teaching vocabulary in context. Teaching vocabulary from a list means that the words are taught as a single item in isolation. Each word has no association with other words. We know that actually teaching vocabulary is clearly more than just presenting new words. Therefore, the best way to improve vocabulary is by presenting them in context (Baker, 1974:47). It is in line with what is pointed out by Farnside (1980:307) that the study of context makes the intended meaning evident even when the meaning is ambiguous or misstated at some restricted points.

In the field of vocabulary teaching, Morgan and Rinvoluceri (1986:3) say that the acquisition of vocabulary is a branching process. It means that words are not learnt mechanically as little packets of meaning, but associatively. Therefore, the teaching of vocabulary should be done in context. Teaching of vocabulary in context means that the words are taught associatively. Students learnt not only the meaning of the words, but also how the words are used together with other words and they depend upon each other. Besides, words that are learnt in context are easier to be remembered than words that stand as single items (Harmer, 1991:24).

According to Ur (1996), teaching vocabulary has to consider 'the what' and 'the how' aspects in teaching vocabularies. What aspects are needed to be

taught to learners, the considerations of each aspects and how to use its aspects in teaching new vocabulary to learners.

2.3. Teaching English Vocabulary to Children at Preschool

Dunn (1983:2) states that children who come to English lessons are expecting to use English in real experiences. They want to be able to talk about things that interest them. Thus, teacher should be able to capture children' enthusiasm and keep it by presenting well-planned lessons, right for their needs and develop mental, the children will make progress in their lessons (Dunn, 1983:1). This means that the teacher should be creative in order to get good progress for her students. According to Miller (1987:40) in teaching learning activities teacher must be more than simply opening book, doing exercises, and following an outline written by someone else. Teacher must be creative. Teacher holds the important role in teaching the elementary level students. Helaly (1987:49) says that children do not have their own motivation to get acquainted with English. Usually children are not motivated in learning another language by themselves as adults do. Here, the teacher must encourage their students and arouse the students motivation in learning English.

Helaly (1987:49) mentions four ways for motivating children to learn English. Those are (1) the material used for teaching children should be drawn from their world and be compatible with their level of maturity, (2) the topic used must be closely linked to the interests and experiences of the children, be easily grasped by them and be presented within the framework of familiar situation

using appropriate language function, (3) situations used in the classroom need to be authentic, interesting to children and should depict the culture of the target language, and (4) because children are not self motivated to learn a foreign language, it must be presented to them through activities and games.

2.4. Flashcards

The use of the term “flashcard” is used at Gym Kidz as a new technique to teach English vocabulary. A flashcards consists of several pictures that represent the English vocabulary object. According to Webster Dictionary (1998), flashcards are any set of cards with words, numbers, etc. on them, which are flashed one by one for quick response, as before a class in a drill. However, this definition of flashcards is not the same as the term of “flashcards” used in Gym Kidz.

Talking about picture, there are some classifications made by the experts. Hill (1989: 5) classifies pictures for class use by the size. They are:

- Large (20 X 30 cm): useful for whole class-work, or when a lot of details are required in a group.
- Medium (10 X 15 cm): useful for group work.
- Small (5 X 5 cm): useful for games and other group work activities.

Finnochiro (1989: 141) states some criteria to be used to make the picture effective for class use, which are:

1. Large enough to be seen from all parts of the room.
2. Clear and simple in design.
3. In black and white, and in color for practice in more advanced units.

Since there are some criteria and classifications about pictures, the flashcard in this study is not categorized as a picture because the flashcard is a variant of the picture to introduce new vocabularies to the children. It's a teaching aid modified on the basis on previous studies about pictures.

2.5. Theoretical Framework

There are two major theories that support this study. The first is about teaching vocabulary and the second explains the use of flashcards to teach vocabulary.

In language learning, the development of the four language skills is closely related to vocabulary. Regarding this, Martin (1977:87) states that one's ability to produce the language skills is determined primarily by one's vocabulary stock. Considering the importance of vocabulary stated above, it is necessary that the teaching of vocabulary should be done well. As previously mentioned, learning words in context is the best and often the easiest way to improve one's vocabulary (Baker, 1974:47).

In teaching vocabulary to children, there are some characteristics of children language learning that cannot be ignored, Shrum and Glisan (1994:58)

mention that children use their emotions to respond to the world. Second, children learn a language faster if they are relaxed. Third, children learn a language well when they are active (Ur, 1996:290). Furthermore, Scott and Ytreberg (1990:2-6) add some characteristics concerning the children language learning. According to them, children have a need of sharing experiences. This creates an atmosphere of involvement and togetherness among them. Children also have short attention and concentration span. Because of this, various activities in the teaching learning process are necessary in order to maintain the children's interest. Activities should be interesting so that children will enjoy participating actively.

In teaching English vocabulary, pictures can be very helpful. Wright (1990:10) supports this opinion by saying that pictures can play a key role in motivating students, contextualizing the language they are using, giving them a reference, and helping to discipline the activity. Pictures can also be used to remind students of what to say. It will be easier to remember a word if they have seen the real object. Flashcards are teaching aid made to offer a new technique in teaching English vocabulary. It contains some pictures to make the learning process more vary so that the students will have a new experience to learn English vocabulary attractively.