Malsela, Sisvia. 2018. *Students’ Problems and Learning Strategies in Mastering English Vocabulary of Eighth Graders at SMP N 9 Sarolangun: A Thesis*, English Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Jambi University. **First supervisor is Drs. Makmur, SE., M.Hum., MA and second supervisor is Lilik Ulfiati, S.Pd, M.Pd.**

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The purposes of this current study were to find out students problems and also to describe the use of learning strategies in vocabulary mastery among eighth graders in SMP N 9 Sarolangun. The *Total Sampling Technique* was used in which the data were collected from 126 students of five classes by using the questionnaire and were analyzed based on Creswell technique. Four aspects related to students’ problems in vocabulary mastery (Meaning, translation, pronunciation, and Grammar) and three aspects for learning strategies (Use references material, practice, and word lists). The participants were asked to answer the questions on the questionnaire...
which consist of 20 items in total, where 10 questions for vocabulary problems and 10 questions for learning strategies. The type of the questions was close-ended question. The result of this study concluded that the students’ problems in vocabulary mastery most frequently in translating the English words. And for the vocabulary learning strategies received two categories, there were practicing (writing, pronouncing, and remembering) and word listing. Therefore, the researcher hoped this study could help students to know their weaknesses so they were able to enrich their English vocabulary by using the learning strategies. It was also suggested for the other researcher who interesting to this topic that they can use this data as the reference for their research.

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is one of the core components of language to determine how well learners speak, listen, read, and write (Richards & Renandya, 2002). The word that students choose in speaking will determine how well they speak. In listening, students’ vocabulary mastery will affect how well they can understand what a speaker says. Meanwhile, in reading students’ vocabulary mastery will affect their ability in comprehending and understanding the writers’ message. Likewise, students’ vocabulary mastery describes how clearly they can convey their idea for the readers, in writing.

The lack of vocabulary makes students difficult to develop their English. At secondary school level, students have to master 1100 vocabulary in English (Barron, 2013). Astaman and Rifai (2006) conducted a study about vocabulary mastery in Indonesia, in their study stated that based on 1994 curriculum secondary school students in Indonesia have to master 1000 vocabularies.

Students find difficulty in differentiating the function of words in a sentence such as subject, predicate, object, and complement. In addition, the students have difficulties in pronunciation or spelling the words. They do not know the meaning of the sentence used in English and difficult to remember the new vocabulary. Moreover, English words are different from Indonesian words. It can be seen from their spelling and pronunciation.
Students think that most of their problems in English because of inadequate vocabulary. For students in SMP N 9 Sarolangun, learning vocabulary needs special effort because English as a target language that very much different from their native and national language. As the result they do not succeed in achieving their learning goals. Therefore, students have to apply learning strategies to solve their problems in vocabulary mastery. Students should know about the effectiveness of learning strategies and use those strategies in their learning.

A learning strategy is a person’s approach to learn and use information. Students who do not know or use the good learning strategies often face some difficulties in learning English and learn passively. According to Dóczi (2011), vocabulary learning strategies are significant because the acquisition of vocabulary is a never-ending process and can solve insurmountable difficulties for language learners. It can be said that through the use of vocabulary learning strategies, learners may be able to maximize the effectiveness of their English language learning. By using the appropriate learning strategies, students can make a planning to help themselves to know what specific steps they can take to improve their learning.

**METHOD**

**Design**
The researcher used descriptive quantitative design method to analyze the students’ problems and learning strategies in mastering the English vocabulary. According to Johnson and Christensen (2008), quantitative design used to describe the word by using variables and it attempted to explain and predict aspects of the word by demonstrating the relationship among variables. Nunan and Bailey (2009), quantitative design would display or analyze data by reporting the data in numerical from including percentages and proportions. Such data could be also provided with helpful graphic displays such as bar graphs and pie charts.

**Population and Sampling Procedures**
According to Creswell (2012) a target population is a group of individuals or organization with some common defining characteristic that the researcher can identify and study In this research, the researcher was took eighth graders of SMP N
9 Sarolangun as the population of the research. There are five classes of eighth graders at SMP N 9 Sarolangun A, B, C, D, E. The researcher was used total sampling technique, where all members of the population have chance to become a sample of this research. As stated in Creswell (2012), total sampling technique used when all members of the population selected to be a sample.

Data Collection Procedures
The researcher conducted this research in SMP N 9 Sarolangun. To get the access in conducting this research, the researcher ask permission from the Chairman of the study program and the School Principle of the SMP N 9 Sarolangun, and also the teacher who are in charge of handling the class that the researcher was conducted her research. The researcher was gave an invitation letter to the participants who are willing to be participants in this research.

The researcher used questionnaire to collect the data in this research. In the statements of Creswell (2012), questionnaire is a form used in survey design that participants in a study complete and return to the researcher. In this research, the researcher constructed the questionnaire in the form of close-ended questions by presenting the questions and providing pre-set response options for the participants. Creswell (2012) also stated that “Survey consist mainly of close-ended questions, the researcher poses a question provides pre-set response options for the participants” (p. 386).

According to Dornyei (2008) the participants or respondents are not required to write their answer, but they just choose one of the options provided. The researcher utilizes Likert scale bases on Dornyei (2008) which consists of a series of statements, all of which related to a particular target which ranges from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Not Sure (NS), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The participants are going to give a symbol or mark (✓) on the provided table.

Validity and Reliability
Content Validity is carried out ascertain whether the contents of the questionnaire are appropriate and relevant to the purpose of the research. Gary Growth – Marnat (2009) mentions that content validity refers to the representativeness and relevance of the assessment instrument with a constraint (a constraint = a set of ideas that cannot be directly measured).
Miller (2009) in his study defined that instrument reliability “as the extent to which a questionnaire, test, observation or any measurement procedure produces the same results on repeated trials.” According to Burton and Mazerolle (2011) stated that reliability refers to the consistency or repeatability of a test or measurement. In short, it is consistent and dependable (Brown, 2004).

**Technique of Data Analysis**

The data from the questionnaire was calculated by using formula as follows:

\[ P = \left( \frac{F}{N} \times t \right) \times 100\% \]

Where:
- \( P \) = Number of percentage
- \( F \) = frequency of answers
- \( t \) = Total number of statements
- \( N \) = Total number of participants

Source: (Wardhani, 2006)

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 22 statistical for windows was used for entry and analyzed the data. SPSS actually used to understand and interpret the result of research. For the quantitative data from the demographic and questionnaire analyzed descriptively in which every participant’s information is transcribed. The last step, the analyzed data was kept by the researcher as references.

**RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter reports the findings and discussion obtained from the questionnaire to analyze students’ vocabulary problems and also vocabulary learning strategies that can be used by the students participating in this survey study. The researcher used the word S1 (e.g. S1 means student 1) in presenting the questionnaire findings.

**Findings**

**Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire**

The questionnaire of this research consisted of 20 statements in which 10 statements of vocabulary problems and 10 statements of solving strategies. The vocabulary problems divided into four aspects which consisted; two statements of pronunciation, two statements of translation, three statements of meaning, and three statements of grammar. For the solving strategies divided into three aspects which consisted; three
statements of using references materials, four statements of practice, and three statements of word listing.

In vocabulary problems, the findings showed that all statements in vocabulary problems received strong and moderate mean scores from students’ answer with none of them received very strong and very weak scores. In the category of meaning, which ranked the strong percentage in frequency ($X = 3.02$, percentage $= 25\%$) showed that most of the students do not understand the meaning of the word without dictionary. The lack of vocabulary make students cannot learn effectively, they did not know the meaning of the words so they have to bring the dictionary in English classroom. This problem often faced by the eighth graders as stated in Rahman (2016) that junior high school students in Indonesia still have the difficulty to find the meaning without dictionary.

In the category of translation, which ranked the strong percentage in frequency ($X = 3.43$, percentage $= 28\%$) showed that students often make a mistake in translating the English vocabulary. Students have many difficulties when they translate the word in Indonesian to English because they do not how to use the right word, for example when they translate the word “banyak” in Indonesia make them confuse because it’s has three options in English “many, must, and have a lot” as Rahman (2016) found that students often make a mistake in translating the words because they did not understand the meaning of the words.

In category of pronunciation, which ranked the moderate percentage of frequency ($X = 2.70$, percentage $= 22\%$) showed that the students’ often make a mistake in pronouncing the English vocabulary as stated in Geylanioglu and Dikilitas (2012) that students face difficulty in pronouncing some words in English. Students did not know how to pronounce the word correctly as stated by Demir (2013) that vocabulary knowledge is essential for learners to develop their speaking skill. Mostly students encounter problem in speaking because their pronunciation is awful. The students’ confessed that they still have difficulty in pronouncing words correctly.

And the last category of grammar, which ranked the strong percentage of frequency ($X = 3.07$, percentage $= 25\%$) showed that the students have a difficulty to differentiate the vocabulary use in present and past tense. The student difficult in differentiating and use the verb 1 and verb 2 because they have a limited vocabulary in English as explained in Sawir (2005) that grammar regarded as the problems by
many students. From the discussion above concluded that the students most frequently have the difficulties in vocabulary problems because they often make a mistake in translating English vocabulary as shown from the strong mean score ($\bar{X} = 3.43$).

In vocabulary learning strategies, the findings also showed that all statements in vocabulary learning strategies received strong and moderate mean scores from students’ answer with none of them received very strong and very weak scores. In category of the use of references materials, which ranked moderate percentage of frequency ($\bar{X} = 3.26$, percentage = 32%) showed that the strategy that can help the students in vocabulary mastery by listening an English song, as stated in second chapter that the students may discover a new word’s meaning by using references materials. By listening the English song makes students enjoy in learning and they could remember the new words in order to master the vocabulary in English. It has been suggested that, “Incidental learning via guessing from context is the most important of all sources of vocabulary learning” (Nation, 2001, p. 232).

In category of practice, which ranked strong percentage of frequency ($\bar{X} = 3.47$, percentage = 34%) showed that the students most frequently practice by writing the new vocabulary and put them in a sentence. This learning strategies could help students in mastering the English vocabulary and also the students could know how to use the words correctly, according to Oxford’s LLS (Language Learning Strategies) classification (as cites in Peng, 2009) stated that students can applied language learning strategies by practicing.

And the last category word listing, which ranked the strong percentage of frequency ($\bar{X} = 3.47$, percentage = 34%) showed that the students make word lists of the new vocabulary that they have known, Gu and Johnson (as cited in Riankamol, 2008) suggested the use of words lists in learning strategies can increase students’ vocabulary mastery. Cohen (2000) suggested that language learning strategies include strategies for identifying the material that needs to be learned, distinguishing it from other material if needed to be, grouping it for easier learning (e.g. grouping vocabulary by category into nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and so forth). From the discussion above concluded two categories that students most frequently in use the learning strategies, there were practicing and make the word lists as shown from the same strong mean score ($\bar{X} = 3.47$).
CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the findings and discussion in the previous chapter, the researcher decided to take two conclusions as follows:

1. Students’ problems in vocabulary mastery at second grade students in SMP N 9 Sarolangun received the result which might indicated that the most frequently of the students have a problem in translating the English vocabulary, because they often make a mistake in translating the English vocabulary. As shown from the percentage of frequency ($\bar{X} = 3.43$). However, for other vocabulary problems perceived by the students as moderately.

2. The vocabulary learning strategies received the result two categories of learning strategies that most frequently by the second grade students of SMP N 9 Sarolangun. There were practice and word listing as shown from the same percentage of frequency ($\bar{X} = 3.47$). The students most frequently use the practice strategy by writing the new vocabulary and put them in a sentence and also making word lists of the new vocabulary that they have known.

By this finding, the problems that students have in vocabulary mastery and what kind of learning strategies that will use by the students in vocabulary mastery. Therefore, it is hoped that the students will know their weaknesses so they tend to enrich their English vocabulary by using the learning strategies. The teachers need to give attention about students’ problems and guiding the students in applying their learning strategies. The teacher also can give an interesting and fun way in teaching since the students still have some problems in English vocabulary mastery. It also suggest for other researcher who interesting to this topic of analyze students’ problems and learning strategies in different school, sample, subject, etc. The last, the researcher suggests to the next researchers that they can use this data as the reference for their research.
REFERENCES


