CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A. Theoretical Description
1. Vocabulary
a. Definition of Vocabulary

Talking about language, vocabulary is the most important element in learning a foreign language as one of the three basic parts (phonetics, vocabulary, and grammar).[1] Vocabulary is one of the centralized problems because to be successful in implementation of communication the acquisition and learning is fundamental requirement and through vocabulary people can communicate their ideas, emotions, and desires. Therefore, people should be able to distinguish between word and vocabulary.[2]

According to Richards and Renandya, vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basic for a people's way to speak, listen, read, and write. Without an extensive and strategies for acquiring new vocabulary, people's often reach their potential, and maybe they can take advantage of language learning opportunities from around them such as listen to the radio, listen to native speakers, using language in a different context, reading and watching television.[3]

Another definition of vocabulary is stated by Hatch and Brown; they say that vocabulary refers to a list or collection of words for a particular language or a list or collection of words by each speaker of the language. Vocabulary is the only system involved of alphabetical order.[4]

In line with that, Hornby also stated that vocabulary is the total number of words combined to a form of a language, or range of words known to be used by a person then the words are arranged in alphabetical order and defined or

---

[1] Qi Pan, Vocabulary Teaching in English Language Teaching, *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* Vol. 1 No. 11 2011., 1586.

[2] Nation, I.S.P, *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary* (United Stated of America: Heinle & Heinle Publishers, 1990), 3.

[3] Richards and Renandya, *Methodology in Language Teaching* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[4] Evelin Hatch and Cheryl Brown, *Vocabulary, Semantics, and Language Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

identified as in a dictionary or glossary. So, a person's ability to use language depends on their vocabulary mastery and how much vocabulary that they know.[5] Vocabulary is all the words that a person knows and uses, all words in language, a list of words with their meanings, especially in a book for learning foreign language.[6]

From the definition above, it can be concluded that vocabulary is the total number of words that are needed to communicate ideas and express the speaker's meaning.

b. Types of Vocabulary

Hiebert and Kamil define vocabulary in two following forms:

1) Productive Vocabulary

Productive vocabulary is a collection of individualized organization customized structures that a person can use when writing and speaking. It is a well-known, recognizable, and frequently used individualized organization customized structure.

2) Receptive Vocabulary

Receptive vocabulary is a collection of words that can be given meaning by someone when listening or reading. There are words that are often less well known to students and less frequent in use. Individuals may be able to assign some meaning to them, although they may not know the full intricacies of the differences. Typically, these are also wording that individuals do not use spontaneously. However, when individuals come across these words, they recognize them, even if imperfectly.[7]

c. Aspects of Vocabulary

According to Gairns and Redman, there are several aspects that need to be considered when teaching vocabulary. These aspects are as follows:

1) The boundary between conceptual meanings: not only knowing what the lexis refers to, but also where are the boundaries that separate them from words of related meaning (e.g., cup, mug, bowl.

---

[5] A. S. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, revised an updated*. Oxford University Press, 1987.

[6] *Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary*, (New Edition: Oxford University Press, 2008), 482.

[7] Elfrieda H. Hiebert and Michael L. Kamil, *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary* (London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2005), 3.

2) Polysemy: distinguishing the various meanings of one-word form with several meanings but are closely related (head: of a person, of a pin, of an organization).
3) Homonymy: distinguishing between the various meanings of one-word form which has various meanings that are not closely related (e.g., a file: used to put papers in or a tool).
4) Homophony: understanding words that have the same pronunciation but different spellings and meanings (e.g., flour, flower).
5) Synonymy: distinguish between different shades of meaning that synonymous words have (e.g., extend, increase, expand).
6) Affective meaning: distinguish between attitude factors and emotional factors (denotation and connotation), which depends on the attitude of the speaker or situation. A sociocultural association of lexical items is another important factor.
7) Style, register, dialect: being able to distinguish between different levels of formality, effects of different contexts and topics, and differences in geographic variation.
8) Translation: awareness of certain differences and similarities between the native's and foreign languages (e.g., false cognates).
9) Grammar of vocabulary: learning the rules that allow students to build different tenses or even different words from the word (e.g., sleep, slept, sleeping; able, unable; disability).
10) Pronunciation: the ability to recognize and reproduce items in speech.[8]

2. Vocabulary Mastery
a. Definition of Vocabulary Mastery

Vocabulary mastery refers to a great skill in processing words from a language. Mastery is individual and diagnostic approaches to teaching, where students continue by studying and testing at their level to achieve a predetermined level of

---

[8] Ruth Gairns and Stuart Redman, *Working with Words* (Cambridge: Cambridge university Press, 1986).

8

success.[9] Vocabulary mastery is the most important thing to facilitate learning those language skills. Vocabulary is one of the elements of language which needs to be mastered. If the students master vocabulary, they can easily expand the language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Vocabulary mastery can be defined as numbers of vocabulary in a language that contains information about meaning, form, and use in the context of communication. This is the basis knowledge that must be mastered by students before mastering English. Rivers in Nunan stated that vocabulary mastery refers to a large skill processing words in language. It is individual achievement and passion.[10]

According to Nation, vocabulary mastery is not a spontaneous process that is easy to do. It starts when a person is still a baby. Basically, the babies first language come from the mother tongue. They will dominate vocabulary through simple words by listening to the spoken words by someone else. It is known that learning English vocabulary will not be successful without English language skills because both are significant in English teaching and learning process.[11]

From the statement above, it can be concluded that vocabulary mastery is not only about remembering words but also being able to use words appropriately for both oral and written needs. Vocabulary mastery is defined as student's complete knowledge of meaning and form words in context appropriately. Student's vocabulary mastery refers to student's ability to recognize, understand, and use vocabulary in English.

b. The Importance of Vocabulary Mastery

In learning English, vocabulary plays an important role in four English language skills. As Schmite and McCarthy say that vocabulary has a significant role in language skills. In listening, vocabulary makes it easy for learners to

---

[9] Richard and Schmidt, *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistic. Fourth Edition* (London: Pearson Education Limited, 2013), 353.

[10] Nunan David., *Language Teaching Methodology* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1991), 121.

[11] I. S. P. Nation., *Learning Vocabulary in Another Language* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 7.

understand what the other saying when spoken. In speaking and writing, vocabulary make it easy for learners to develop their ideas. In reading, vocabulary makes it easy for students to understand the text. Vocabulary should not be neglected by anyone who learns a language.[12]

Vocabulary is also important to be able to communicate with other people. Good vocabulary mastery also can make many people, especially learners have good understanding of themselves and in all aspects in their life. If people are in lack of vocabulary or only have little vocabulary, they will have trouble in communication and achievement because vocabulary will be needed not only in speaking, but also reading, listening, and writing. According to Xu, vocabulary is the basic ingredients to be included in sentence patterns because there will be no sentences, no essays, and even no language without vocabulary.[13]

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that vocabulary is crucial in learning language. Vocabulary mastery cannot be denied in learning English, not only for listening and speaking skills but also in their reading and writing as well. Because vocabulary is one of the most critical elements to improve students' English skills. Vocabulary mastery can also be developed independently experience through their life experiences. This will make it easier for someone to use language in communication. So, vocabulary mastery will be useful because it can make it easier to learn language, easy to understand what people talking about, and easy to create discussions on different topics.

3. Problems in Mastering Vocabulary

The first step in successful vocabulary learning is to identify problems faced by students. Thornbury proposes several factors that make students find some words more difficult, as follows:

---

[12] Norbert Schmitt and Michael McCarthy, *Vocabulary: description, acquisition and pedagogy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 6.

[13] Pan Q and Xu R, *Vocabulary Teaching in English Language Teaching, Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 1586.

a. Pronunciation

        Pronunciation is the way certain people pronounce words in a language.[14] Research shows that difficult words to pronounce are more difficult to learn. Potentially difficult because vocabulary will typically be those that contain sounds that are unfamiliar to some learners.[15] Students cannot identify the pronunciation of sounds like vowels, consonants, or word diphthongs. There is different pronunciation between English and Indonesian vocabularies. English has different sound with Indonesian sound. Therefore, students who have problems in pronunciation will have difficulty in pronunciation of vocabulary.

b. Spelling

      Spelling is the writing of words or words with the required letters, the arrangement of the letters that make up a word, and the process of forming words by arranging letters. Students' have problems in spelling, they are still confused to recognize the words in a sentence. Sounds-spelling mismatches are likely to because of errors, either pronunciation or spelling, and can contribute to word difficulties. While most English spelling is quite law-abiding, there are also some deviations. Words that contain a silent letter are particularly problematic: foreign, listen, headache, climbing, bored, honest, cupboard, muscle, etc.

c. Length and Complexity

      Long words do not seem to be any more problems to learn than short words. However, in rule of thumb, high-frequency words tend to be short in English, and therefore students are likely to meet them more often, a factor that support their leaning ability.

d. Grammar

      Grammatical information is tied into words, and learning words can lead students along the way into grammar. This shows that if we give high priority to vocabulary, we do not thus leave grammar. Ur states that vocabulary grammar is necessary taught if this is not clearly covered by the grammar

---

[14] Risky Gushendra., *An Experimental Study: Improving Students' Vocabulary Mastery by Using English Songs*, *Indonesian Journal of Integrated English Language Teaching.* Vol. 3, No. 1, 2017, 54.

[15] Scoot Thornbury., *How to teach vocabulary* (London: Pearson Education Limited, 2002), 27.

rules. Grammar problematic is also the grammar related to words, especially if it differs from the first language equivalent. Remember whether a verb like enjoy, love, or hope, is followed by an infinitive (to swim) or an -ing form (swimming) can add to the difficulty.

e. Meaning

Ur says that to find the meaning of a word it can be done through translation that is words in learner's mother tongue which equivalent in meaning to the material being taught. A word's meaning can be determined by its relationship by the other words. A word may have more than one meaning when used in different meaning context. To know the meaning, teachers can use methods such as guided discovery and using dictionary. When two words overlap in meaning, learners are likely in confusion. Make and do are a case in point: you make breakfast and make an appointment, but you do the housework and do a questionnaire.[16]

f. Range, Connotation and idiomaticity

Words that can be used in a variety of context will generally be considered easier than its synonym with a narrower range. So, put is a very wide-ranging verb, compared to imposed, place, position, etc. Likewise, thin is a safer bet than skinny, slim, slender. Uncertainty, as with the connotations of some words can cause problem too. Thus, propaganda has a negative connotation in English, but it the closest equivalent in other language may diverge. Finally, idiomatic words or expressions (such as make up your mind, keep an eye on, etc.) will generally be more difficult than words whose meaning is transparent (decide, watch).
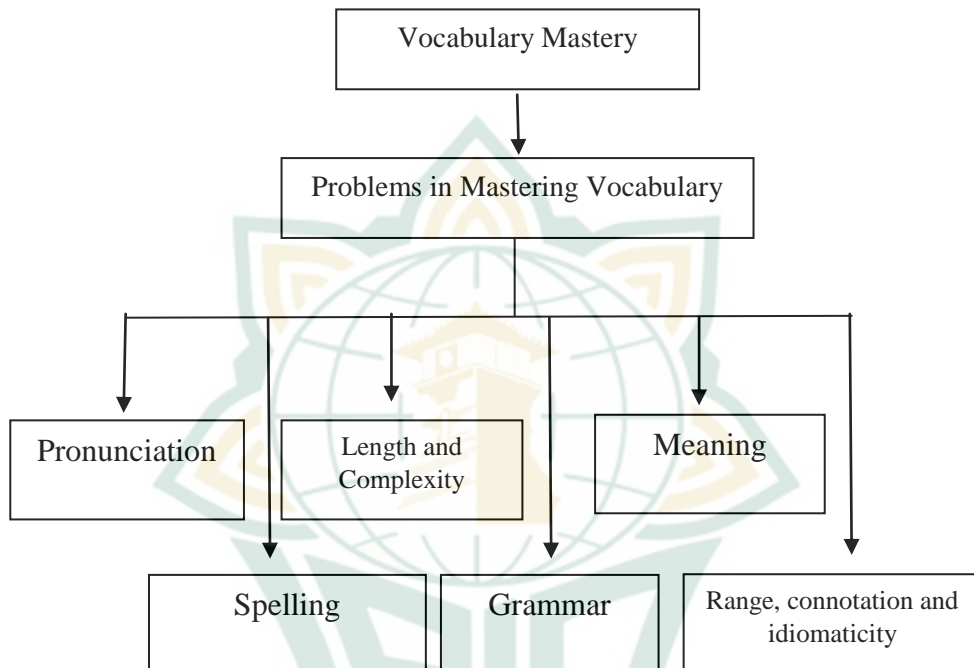
B. Theoretical Framework

Vocabulary is the most important components in learning language. Without mastering vocabulary, English as a foreign language will not be able to achieve in four skills that need to be mastered in English, such as listening, reading, writing, and speaking. If they cannot achieve that skills, it means that they cannot reach the language proficiency. Based on the theoretical description that have been described previously, this theoretical framework is built on the description problems experienced by students in mastering

---

[16] Penny Ur, *A Course in Language Teaching: Practice and Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 61-62.

vocabulary. This theoretical framework aims to analyze the problems faced by students in mastering vocabulary. In this section, the researcher analyzes what problems that cause these issues and how do students overcome these problems. The theoretical framework in this research as follows:

Figure 2.1
Theoretical Framework

C. Review of Previous Study

This research has differences and similarities with the following previous studies:
1. Research conducted by Rohmatillah (2014) entitled *"A Study on Students' Difficulties in Learning Vocabulary"*.[17]

The subject of the study was the students of the first semester of English Education Department at IAIN who took vocabulary class. This study used a qualitative research design using interviews and questionnaires. The findings of this study showed that students still face problems or difficulties in learning vocabulary. The types of difficulties faced by students in

---

[17] Rohmatillah, A Study on Difficulties in Learning Vocabulary, *English Education Journal.* Vol. 6, No. 1, 2014.

difficulties in learning vocabulary were various. The types of difficulties faced by students are: (1) almost all students have difficulty in pronouncing words, (2) how to write and spell, (3) differences in the grammatical form of words known as inflection is one of the causes of students' difficulties in learning vocabulary, (4) students have difficulty in choosing the right meaning of words, (5) still confused in using words based on the context, and (6) students are also still confused when finding idiomatic words and expression. There are several factors that cause students' difficulties in learning vocabulary: (1) the written form is different from the spoken form in English, (2) the numbers of words that students need to learn is large, (3) limited resources about the words, (4) the complexity of word knowledge. Knowing a word involves more than just knowing in dictionary definition, (5) lack of grammatical understanding of the words, and the last (6) incorrect pronunciation is often caused by lack of sound similarity between English and student's mother tongue.

The difference between this research and the upcoming study is the object of study. The research by Rohmatillah conducted on the first semester students at IAIN while the upcoming study will be conducted on seventh grade students of Islamic private school. Another difference is in the previous study focused on students' difficulties in learning vocabulary, meanwhile in the upcoming study will more focused on problems that can affect in mastering vocabulary. The similarity between this study and the upcoming study is both of these studies same as using qualitative method.

2. Research conducted by Ivan Susanto Sulawazo, et al. (2020) entitled *"Analysis of Students' Vocabulary in Learning English"*.[18]

The aims of this study are to analyze students' vocabulary in learning English at ninth grade at SMP Swasta Yayasan Pangeran Antasari, Medan in 2018/2019 academic year. The researcher used a qualitative descriptive method. There are 72 students who decide in two classes in the ninth grade as the population. But the researcher only took one class consisting of 36 students as a sample. To collecting the data, the researcher used questionnaires and vocabulary comprehension test as procedure. The researcher

---

[18] Ivan Susanto Salawazo, et al. Analysis of Students' Vocabulary in Learning English. *Linguistic English Education and Art (LEEA) Journal*. Vol. 3, No. 2, 2020.

identifies the difficulties in student's vocabulary and cause difficulties by analyzing students answer sheet and their mistake. The results of the study were as many as 24 students could not answer correctly. The researcher concludes the causes of students' vocabulary difficulties in learning English are the first difficulty in pronouncing words. Grammatical form is the second case because the written form is different from the spoken form in English. The last, students do not pay their attention to learning English more, know more words, and their time limited for resources. Information about the vocabulary of new words, and they are easy to forget the words.

The difference between this study and the upcoming study is the object of study. The research by Ivan Susanto Salawazo, et al. conducted at ninth grade at SMP Swasta Yayasan Pangeran Antasari, Medan meanwhile the upcoming study will be conducted on seventh grade students of Islamic private school in Kudus. The similarity between this study and the upcoming study is both studies same as using qualitative method and analyze the ability of students' vocabulary mastery.

3. Research conducted by Gisma Wijayana, et al. (2018) entitled *"An Analysis of Students Difficulties in Mastering Vocabulary"*.[19]

The aims of this study are to determine the difficulties faced by seventh grade students in mastering vocabulary and to determine the factors that affect the students' difficulty in mastering vocabulary. The researcher is taken the data from observations, interviews, and documentation. The result of this study explains that the student's difficulties are in pronouncing vocabulary and spelling words because the students are lazy to practice pronunciation because they feel afraid when they wrong in pronunciation and spelling English word. In the meaning of vocabulary that keep students silent during the lesson. Low student motivation also impacts the student's difficulties in understanding vocabulary. The factors that can influence students in mastering vocabulary are the lack of students practicing vocabulary pronunciation, the students are less use the dictionaries, and the lack of time for learning English.

The difference between this study and the upcoming study is in the research by Gisma Wijayana, et al. more focus on

---

[19] Gisma Wijayana, et al. An Analysis of Students Difficulties in Mastering Vocabulary, *Jurnal Pendidikan Edutama,* 2018.

analyzing students' difficulties in mastering vocabulary meanwhile the upcoming study will be more focuses on analysis problems in mastering vocabulary. The similarity between this study and the upcoming study is same as conducted on seventh grade students.

4. Research conducted by Chris Yovie Sitorus, et al. (2018) entitled *"An Analysis of Vocabulary Mastery of Eighth Grade Students at SMP Amalyatul Huda Medan".*[20]

    The aims of this study are to analyze student's vocabulary mastery. This study used a qualitative design method using observation, interviews, and testing. The sample of this study was 20 students in eighth grade and 1 English teacher. The results of the study show that students' vocabulary mastery in eighth grade is very low. The researcher suggested to the English teacher to change the techniques and study habits to combine and expand students' vocabulary and make those students' feel not bored and have difficulty in learning English.

    The difference between this study and the upcoming study is in the object of study. The research by Chris Yovie Sitorus, et al. was conducted on eighth grade students at SMP Amalyatul Huda, Medan meanwhile the upcoming study will be conducted on seventh grade students in an Islamic private school in Kudus. The similarity between this study and upcoming study is both of this study same as using qualitative methods and analyze the ability of students' vocabulary mastery.

---

[20] Chris Yovie Sitorus, et al. An Analysis of Vocabulary Mastery of Eighth Grade Students at SMP Amalyatul Huda Medan, *PROJECT (Professional Journal of English Education.* Vol. 4, No. 1, 2021.

16