

## An Analysis of Students' Vocabulary Mastery in Using Antonym of Second Grade Students in SMP Swasta Advent 5 Medan

Sahlan Tampubolon<sup>1</sup>, Nurhayati Sitorus<sup>2</sup>, Ririn Krisniati Panjaitan<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup> English Department, Nommensen HKBP University Medan  
e-mail: [ririn.panjaitan@student.uhn.ac.id](mailto:ririn.panjaitan@student.uhn.ac.id)

### Abstract

*In this study, descriptive analysis was used as the method which focused on describing the students' vocabulary mastery in using antonym. The data was taken from 25 students of the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade in SMP Swasta Advent 5 Medan. The study used content analysis as the instrument of collecting data. The result of this study shows that the level ability of students' vocabulary mastery in using defining antonym was categorized as poor level. The percentage of the level ability of students' vocabulary mastery in doing the antonym test shows that from 25 samples, there were 3/12 % students fall in the excellent level, 2/8 % students fall in the good level, 3/12 % students fall in the fair level, 6/24 % students fall in weak level, 11/44 % students fall in poor level which can be concluded as the most level reached by the students. The graphic clearly shows that most of the students' vocabulary mastery fall in the poor level in using antonym. The result of students' interview which involved 5 participants which aimed to find out the students' difficulties in learning vocabulary shows that most of students reciprocally mention that English is one of the most difficult subjects learnt at school. The lack of repetition by students was also one of the main reason of students limited vocabularies which lead to the result of poor level ability of students' vocabulary mastery particularly in defining antonym.*

**Keywords:** *descriptive analysis, vocabulary, antonyms*

### INTRODUCTION (Bold 12)

Language plays a very important role in human life, in general language is called as tool of communication, because people use language to express their feeling, thought, stories, and experiences. Due to the function of the language, it's clearly can be said that language and human are inseparable. In other word, language is essential for human every day interaction. English is known as international language that used as communication tools to access the information all around the world. Generally, English has four basic skills that should be mastered by students. They are: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Those four skills related to each other. It can be said that when students express their thought in form of English oral, they also have to be able to express in form of written. Just like when students are able to read something in English, they also have to be able to catch something they heard in English. To support those all skills, students need to improve their other skill which is vocabulary. Vocabulary is one of very important aspect in learning English. Comprehending good vocabulary enable students to reach their goals in learning 4 skills in English. The mastery of vocabulary sometimes can't be reached optimally. In learning vocabulary, students mostly found difficulty because there are a lot of kinds of vocabulary including part of speech. One example of vocabulary types delivered by Scott (2002) is Antonym. Antonym is a word or phrase that is opposite in meaning to a particular word or a phrase in the same language. For example: male/female, single/married, dead/alive, open/close, empty/full, up/down, right/left. It's interesting to see how students try to understand the opposite meaning of a word and find the correct antonym of a word. According to the pre-interview done by the writer to the students who couldn't pass the

observation test yet, it was found that the lack of vocabulary is the most cause of this problem. Most of students weren't able yet to identify the meaning of the words and lead to their difficulty to find the opposite meaning of the word. It caused by the condition of English as the second language which make the students were unfamiliar with the words. The students also had a hard time to learn vocabulary due to the method of technique used by teacher in teaching the antonyms. It's clearly can be seen that the students need to improve their vocabulary mastery especially in antonyms. Based on the background of the study elaborated above, the writer conducted a study entitled: An Analysis of Students' Vocabulary Mastery in Using Antonym of Second Grade Students in SMP Swasta Advent 5 Medan. The problems of this study are formulated as how is the students' vocabulary mastery in using antonym of second grade students in SMP Swasta Advent 5 Medan. and what are the difficulties faced by students in using antonym in learning vocabulary. This research was limited to be focus on analyzing students' vocabulary mastery in using antonym by the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students of SMP Swasta Advent 5 Medan.

## Literature Review

### Vocabulary

Learning new words is an important part of learning a new language. Learning a word is very important to communicate, vocabulary is essential and in recent years vocabulary has become increasingly central to language teaching. Vocabulary is one of important aspect that must be learn students in foreign language learning. Vocabulary plays important role in language learning. Vocabulary can help the leaners mastering skills in language learning. According Lynne (2001) vocabulary is one of the language aspects that should be learnt. Learning vocabulary is important because we are able to speak, write, and listen nicely we have to know vocabulary first. Vocabulary is the total number of the words which make up a language Hornby (2006). As Nunan (2004) states that "vocabulary is the collection of words that an individual knows". That is a reason why without a sufficient vocabulary, students will have difficulties in learning a language. It means that in learning vocabulary we have to know the meaning of it and also understand and can use it in sentence context. Through vocabulary, the students are able to master the four language skills; they are, listening, speaking, writing and reading. That is why the mastery of vocabulary determines the mastery of four language skills. By having good mastery of vocabulary the students are able to communicate well and clearly with each other. Linse (2005) stated that vocabulary is one of the Languages that should be realized or understood by Language learners. To communicate well, vocabulary is a very important role in the teaching and learning process. Watskin (2005) states that in an approach which values the ability to communicate, vocabulary is essential, and in recent years vocabulary has become increasingly central to language teaching. Vocabulary is all the words used or understood by ability person Pongrantz (2006), and vocabulary also very helpful in construction and arranging the sentences or to articulate with others students should to have prosperity vocabularies. It is a crucial foundation in language learning. The school age apprentices will have little difficult when the teacher introduced classification activities in the classroom. Based on the explanation of some theories above, some expert proposes the nature of vocabulary in different ways. Although the idea refers to the same concept. Some of them explain that vocabulary is knowledge of words and word meaning. Additionally vocabulary is more complex than this definition suggests. So vocabulary is the essential part of a language that support all skill in a language; speaking, writing, reading and listening.

### **Importance of Vocabulary**

Vocabulary is the first basic important aspect for learning English by learners. By mastering vocabulary, the students are able to communicate both orally and written well. Also, by having a lot of vocabularies, the learners are hoped to master four English skills in English such as reading, speaking, writing and listening. Yuliansyah (2018) argues that the acquisition of an adequate vocabulary is essential for successful second language use because, without an extensive vocabulary, the learners will be unable to use the structures and function that may have learned for comprehensible communication. Vocabulary learning is very important for people who learn English both as foreign language and as second language. Rohmatillah (2016) points out learning vocabulary is an important aspect of language two and foreign language acquisition and academic achievement and is vital to reading comprehension and proficiency, to which it is closely linked. From the statement it can be concluded vocabulary is the first element in English. It must be mastered well by young learners to support the English mastery.

### **Vocabulary Mastery**

Vocabulary mastery refers to the number of words someone knows. Vocabulary mastery can be defined as a number of vocabulary or words in the memory of users or learners. The students usually have a certain motivation to master the vocabulary, and it always relation in daily life. For example, when a student wants to get the information, they need to know what the expression for asking ordering meals, booking a room in a hotel, or buying something in a department store. Vocabulary mastery is one of the factors to master English as foreign language. It means that the students have the ability in understanding and using the word and meaning. The larger vocabulary the students master, the better they perform their language. By having a limited vocabulary, the students will find difficulties in mastering English skill. The mastery of English vocabulary itself is closely related to the ability of the learner in acquiring the vocabulary. Pongrantz (2006), points out that “mastering a language means being able to comprehend the vocabulary and its phonological system both in speech and in writing”. It means that learner who learns English as the second language must comprehend the meaning of the words and is able to apply them in sentences. Vocabulary is central to language and of critical importance to typical language learner without a sufficient vocabulary; one cannot communicate effectively or express his ideas in both oral and written form Yang (2000). Vocabularies become central to any language acquisition process especially in introducing and consolidating new lexical items. Based on explanation above vocabulary is always related to word. In learning language vocabulary is one step to know the words, understanding the meaning and used them in sentence.

### **METHOD**

The writer used descriptive qualitative research design in order to analyze the students' vocabulary mastery of antonyms. Endraswara (2014) states that descriptive qualitative research is described by words. It explores a phenomenon by describing it with non-numeric language in the context and specific paradigm. Ary (2010) stated that descriptive qualitative research refers to draw in very detail description about phenomenon based on subject experience and perspective. According to Kumar (2011), population is the bigger group which is going to be selected as a sample of the study. The population of this study was the eighth grades students of Swasta Advent 5 Medan. Moreover, Neuman (2000) explained that sample is a part of group which is selected for any given study. The population of this study was the Second Grade of SMP Swasta Advent 5 Medan. The sample that participated in this study is class of VIII A which consist of 25 students. In this study, the writer used two instruments to collect the data. The instruments that used were students'

assignment or simply form as a vocabulary test and interviews. The students' test sheets were calculated to find out each of students' skill in vocabulary of antonyms to determine whether their vocabulary mastery is excellent, good, average, or low. There were 50 multiple choice questions which asked the students to choose the exact opposite of the given words. To fulfill all the information needed in this study, there are two kinds of data collection. They are students' assignment sheets and interviews. The following are the procedure of data collection:

1. Students' text sheet

To answer the first research question, the writer gave 50 multiple choice questions about antonym. To make it easier the question was given through Quizizz application, so the students just need to click the answer based on the options on the display. The writer gave 80 minutes to the students to answer the questions and the writer got the students' result automatically.

2. Interview

Fully database in qualitative with rich detail to give the response of informant generally the answers were interview and record. Ary (2010) stated that interviews are used by researcher in order to obtain data or information from people about opinion, beliefs, and feeling about a situation in their own words. This writer used semi-structured interview to get some answers from the informant. Fontana (2000) stated "Semi-structured interview is one of the most powerful ways in which we try to understand our fellow human beings". This interview gave open-ended response, explore the reason, identify the participant's comments, and created the options for responding. In this study, there were some questions related to open-ended types. It was asked to the students to answer the question based on their understandings, and explored their reasons and comments about vocabulary antonyms. In addition, the interview was recorded by using recorder (smartphone), and then the data was transcribed and analyzed easily. This is conducted to gather information and answer of the second research question on what are the difficulties faced by students in learning vocabulary antonyms. There are two various data that was analyzed in this study, they are: students' test sheet (antonym multiple choice questions) and interview session. In order to get score gained by each students the data from students' test was calculated by using formula proposed by Supranto (2000) below:

$$M = \frac{X}{N}$$

M = mean score

X = correct answer

N = number of all items.

## RESULT/S AND DISCUSSION

Based on the result of the students' test, it was found that there are 80 % students who haven't pass the good comprehension of mastering vocabulary in using the antonym. The writer calculated each students' score and categorized them into their own level of ability in defining antonym. The writer used the formula which has been formulated in the previous chapter in order to find the percentage of findings. The students' level vocabulary mastery particularly in defining antonyms can be seen on the table below:



*The Graphic of Students Vocabulary Mastery in Defining Antonyms.*

The graphic presented above shows the students' vocabulary mastery in doing the antonym test. It can be seen that from 25 samples, there were 12 % students fall in the excellent level, 8 % students fall in the good level, 12 % students fall in the fair level, 24 % students fall in weak level, 44 % students fall in poor level which can be concluded as the most level reached by the students. The graphic clearly shows that most of the students' vocabulary mastery fall in the poor level in using antonym. Furthermore, the result of interview session with students can be summarized that the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students of SMP Swasta Advent 5 Medan were in sync mentioning that English is one of the most difficult subjects learnt at school. The lack of repetition by students was also one of the main reason of students limited vocabularies which lead to the result of poor level ability of students' vocabulary mastery particularly in defining antonym.

## CONCLUSION

Through the descriptive analysis of the data which taken from 25 students in doing the test of vocabulary antonym, it can be concluded that the level ability of students' vocabulary mastery in using defining antonym was categorized as poor level. The percentage of the level ability of students' vocabulary mastery in doing the antonym test shows that from 25 samples, there were 3/12 % students fall in the excellent level, 2/8 % students fall in the good level, 3/12 % students fall in the fair level, 6/24 % students fall in weak level, 11/44 % students fall in poor level which can be concluded as the most level reached by the students. The graphic clearly shows that most of the students' vocabulary mastery fall in the poor level in using antonym. The result of students' interview which involved 5 participants shows that most of students reciprocally mention that English is one of the most difficult subjects learnt at school. The lack of repetition by students was also one of the main reason of students limited vocabularies which lead to the result of poor level ability of students' vocabulary mastery particularly in defining antonym. In relation to the conclusion, the writer would like to pointed suggestions to students and further researcher related to the term of vocabulary of antonym. For students, it is advisable to increase knowledge about kinds of vocabularies particularly in using or defining antonym. For further researcher, it's recommended to apply descriptive analysis research involving more participant and examining the research in various discipline which not only focus on one kinds of vocabulary to get more extensive data and another perspective of the data.

**REFERENCE**

- Ary, D. e. (2010). *Introduction to Research in Education*. California: Wadsworth Publishing.
- Cresswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational Research: planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. USA: Pearson.
- Dan Harris, M. M. (2009). Classification for a Changing World. *IDS Working Papers*, 2009(326).
- Flick, U. (2009). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. British: SAGE.
- Fontana, A. &. (2000). *The interview: From structured questions to negotiated text. Handbook of qualitative research*. CA: SAGE.
- Gay, L. R. (2011). *Educational Research Competence for Analysis and Application. Tenth Edition*. New York: Pearson.
- Harmer, J. (2001). *The Practice of English Language Teaching. Third Edition*. Cambridge: Longman.
- Hornby, A. S. (2006). *Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary* . Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kamil, H. H. (2005). *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Kumar, R. (2011). *Research Methodology. a step-by-step guide for begginer*. London: SAGE.
- Linse. (2005). *Practical English Language Teaching: Young Learners*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Lynne, C. (2001). *Teaching Language to Young Learners*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Pree.
- Neuman, W. L. (2000). *Social Research Method*. New York: Pearson.
- Nunan, D. (2004). *Task-Based Language Teaching*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Powell, W. R. (1986). Teaching Vocabulary through Opposition. *Journal of Reading*, 29(7), 61-62.
- Scott, T. (2002). *How to Teach Vocabulary*. New York: Pearson Education.
- Shepherd, J. (1980). *Collage Vocabulary Skill*. Hongton: Mifflin Company.