

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter consists of the background of the problem, formulation of the problem, objective of the research, the uses of the research, scope of the research and definition of terms.

### **1.1. Background of the Problem**

Vocabulary is one of the aspects that are presented in the classroom during the process of language teaching. Nowadays, a major challenge facing English foreign language learners is the development of a vocabulary size that would permit them to function adequately in many English situations. According to the curriculum, SMA graduates are expected to have vocabulary size of about 4000 words. By obtaining this vocabulary level, the students are expected not to meet big difficulties in using English as a means of communication, both for spoken and written language. Therefore, by mastering a large number of vocabularies, the students will be successful in learning a foreign language.

Vocabulary is considered as the one of the most complex aspect of language to study. This is so because vocabulary has some components, namely: noun, verb, adverb, pronoun, adjective, etc. Besides, the students encounter up to 100.000 different words during their academic reading. As learners make the new big transition from learning English for basic communication, they need to learn the

words critical to vocabulary development. In order to develop the required vocabulary knowledge, learners should be exposed to various extensive learning. So it can be said that vocabulary learning is difficult field of study.

Broadly, learning language can not be separated from learning vocabulary because language itself consists of many types of vocabulary which make up the language. (Fries, 1975: 38) indicated that without having vocabulary, one cannot communicate well. Hence, acquiring specific amount of vocabulary is necessary for the students if they want to be able to communicate in the target language.

Vocabulary knowledge is one of the language aspects crucial for fluent language use (Nation 1990). As one of the language components, vocabulary gives significant support to the students in mastering four language skills. In listening skill, vocabulary is required by the students to understand what the speaker or the teacher says. In speaking skill, vocabulary is required by the students to select what words that should be or should not be spoken appropriately. In reading skill, vocabulary is required by the students to understand the message intended by the author from the written materials. In writing skill, vocabulary is required by the students to make any kind of sentences, paragraphs, essay or even articles correctly. Therefore, without obtaining enough vocabulary, the students will find it is more difficult to master the four language skills.

According to Fries (1975: 45), vocabulary is divided vocabulary into four types, namely: content words, function words, substitute words and distributed words. In this present research, based on the four types of English vocabulary, the content words (noun, verb and adjective) was taken as the material in both of

morphological awareness and English vocabulary size since it is assumed that Senior High School students have mastered it. Content words can be associated into and it has various part such as noun, adjective, verb and adverb, and the students find more problem in differentiating and it become the problem that faced by the students in mastering vocabulary.

Previous study conducted by Rika Triyani (2011) in SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Bandar Lampung pointed out that Senior High School Students are incapable of achieving sufficient scores of the vocabulary test given. Most of them cannot answer the test given easily. This problem principally occurred because many students did not have sufficient knowledge of part of speech related to their application about vocabulary learning strategy. They met difficulties in understanding the meaning of vocabulary in English text and to form meaningful sentence construction.

In addition, based on the researcher interview with the English Teacher in SMA Al-Azhar 3 Bandar Lampung where this research was conducted, most of the third grade students are incapable of mastering the required number of vocabulary. When the students found difficult words, they tend to open their dictionary. It made the students forget the meaning easily. Therefore, when they read and tried to understand sentence or a text, they tend to focus on every word than sentence or entire text, and they are busy with their dictionary. Therefore, their understanding about the sentence or the text is poor and they become frustrated when they find some words in a sentence that they do not understand.

One potential vocabulary learning strategy is the use of morphological awareness. Morphological awareness is defined as the ability to use the knowledge of word formation rules and the pairings between sounds and meanings (Kuo & Anderson, 2006: 161). Word formation is the process of forming forms by adding affixes which can create new words, usually by modifying or changing the meaning of a root word. The understanding of word formation can reach the general objectives of the broad lines of English teaching program that students should know the meaning of at least 2000 words given in the text.

In other words, with morphological awareness learners are able to learn morphemes and morphemic boundaries by disassembling complex words into meaningful parts (e.g. *childhoods* is derived from the base *child* and suffix *hood* plus *s*), understanding the roots, affixes (e.g. *child* which means baby and suffix *hood* which means the state of being and suffix *s* to indicate plural nouns), and reassembling the meaningful parts into new meanings (e.g. the words *motherhood*, *fatherhood*, *brotherhood* are combined from word *mother* and suffix *hood*). The practice of this dissembling and reassembling method is called *morphological analysis*.

The use of morphological awareness as a potential strategy for vocabulary learning is the focus of this study. Anglin (1993: 58) stated that by having Morphological Awareness, the students could analyze the morphological structure of complex words which they have not actually learned before to figure out the meanings. This idea was supported by Morin (2003: 87) who proposed the strategy of using morphological knowledge to infer words meanings. In

accordance with the background discussed, this research focused on investigating the correlation between morphological awareness and English vocabulary size at the third grade of SMA Al – Azhar 3 Bandar Lampung.

## **1.2. Formulation of the Problem**

In reference to the background above, the formulation of the problem in this study was as follow:

“Is there any significant correlation between the students’ morphological awareness and their English vocabulary size?”

## **1.3. Objective of the Research**

The objective of the research was to find out whether there was a significant correlation between students’ morphological awareness and their English vocabulary size.

## **1.4 Uses of the Research**

Hopefully, this study in particular, can have two uses, they are:

- Theoretically, the study presented here attempts to evaluate and to extend findings from previous research to the context of English Foreign Language learners in Indonesia.
- Practically, the aim of study was to assess the potential value of incorporating instructions in morphological awareness as part of EFL vocabulary learning.

### **1.5 Scope of the Research**

This present research was Co-relational study. It was conducted at the third grade students at class XII IPA 3 of SMA Al-Azhar 3 Bandar Lampung which consisted of 40 students. This study was specifically aimed in investigating whether morphological awareness significantly correlates with English vocabulary size. English morphology involves knowledge of inflectional and word formation rule which involves derivational and compounding process. This research focused on inflectional, derivational and compounding. Firstly, the English vocabulary size and English morphological awareness for these learners were measured. Then, the link between vocabulary size and morphological awareness was assessed, with possible implications for morphological awareness as the predictor of vocabulary learning.

### **1.6 Definition of Terms**

Some terms need to be clarified as shown below on the purpose to avoiding misinterpretation:

1. Morphology refers to the study of forms. Linguistics morphology refers to the study of words, their internal structure and the mental process that are involved in word formation (Arnoff and Fudeman, 2005: 3).
2. Morphological awareness is defined as the ability to use the knowledge of word formation rules and the pairings between sounds and meanings. With morphological awareness, learners are able to learn morphemes and morphemic boundaries by disassembling complex words into meaningful

parts, understanding the roots, affixes, and reassembling the meaningful parts into new meanings. The practice of this dissembling and reassembling method is called *morphological analysis*. (Kuo & Anderson, 2006: 161).

3. Vocabulary is a set of words known to a person entity, or that are part of specific language which will make the language meaningful. Vocabulary can not be separated from language because language itself is built up by vocabulary. Therefore, without some knowledge of vocabulary, neither language production nor language comprehension would be possible (Anglin, 1993). Vocabulary is classified into four types, they are: content words, function words, substitute words and distributed words.
4. Vocabulary size refers to the breadth of vocabulary knowledge which deals with the number of words learners can master based in certain levels. The breadth of vocabulary is defined as the size of a learner's vocabulary (how many words are known).