

An analysis of students' difficulties in learning vocabulary at secondary school in Muhamadiyah Waipare Maumere

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- Abstract : This study aimed to identify the challenges and variables that eighth-grade students encounter when learning vocabulary. A quantitative research design was used in this study. The researchers employed close-ended questionnaires as the data collection tool in conjunction with an indirect communication technique to obtain the data. The eighth-grade pupils were the focus of this study. All of the data underwent descriptive analysis. The results demonstrated that students had a variety of challenges when it came to learning vocabulary. Grammar is the main factor, but students also have trouble learning vocabulary because of pronunciation and meaning. Additionally, there are external and internal factors that affect how well students learn vocabulary. The internal components included development, IQ, experience, drive, and memory. The usage of learning media, school facilities, family, and a variety of teaching methods were the external factors. The solutions to these problems are to read a lot of English vocabulary, practice learning vocabulary through exercises, and cultivate enthusiasm and motivation for learning vocabulary.
- Keywords : *students, difficulties, learning, vocabulary*
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INTRODUCTION

One of the essential components for everyone in learning a foreign language is vocabulary. Without learning the vocabulary, it is difficult to attain any language proficiency (Afzal, 2019) especially for those whose English is not their first language because it is the foundation of learning a language. This statement is in line with Nathaya (2013) said that vocabulary is one of the important aspects of language teaching. Therefore, the students should have the ability in understanding and use the words and meanings. The students can learn English more easily by understanding the meaning of those words.

However, there are some difficulties experienced by those who learn vocabulary, such as the use of foreign words that they have never heard before. This is also experienced by students in school, especially students with other language backgrounds. According to Fadhilah and Dilla (2023), learn of a second language may be presented with unfamiliar terms or see them utilized in unique and sometimes perplexing ways. They could even come across notions that aren't represented by words in their own language.

Based on the information the researcher got from the teacher, many students found it difficult to learn English due to a lack of understanding and knowledge of word meaning, so that the learning material was difficult for students to understand. This is also because students are still new in learning English. Therefore, it is important to conduct research on students' difficulties in learning vocabulary, so it can make the English teachers easier and enable them to identify any problems that students may have while they are learning vocabulary. In addition, some words have more than one meaning. According Mesmer and Hiebert (2015), words express complex and frequently many meanings. Furthermore, these complicated, numerous meanings of words must be comprehended in the context of other words in sentences and paragraphs of text. It are essential to understand the student's difficulties in learning vocabulary, so it can give a better understanding to the teachers and educators in teaching English vocabulary.

From the previous research done by Rohmatillah (2014, p. 69), it shows that practically Students frequently have challenges in pronouncing words, writing, and spelling, as well as variances in grammatical forms of a word. vocabulary. Another research on vocabulary learning was conducted by Paduttungi (2020), the research's findings offer that students had a great deal of difficulty learning vocabulary in terms of pronunciation, spelling, length, complexity, and parts of speech. Than research on vocabulary learning was conducted by Komalasari (2022) showed that the most common challenge students have is a lack of comprehension of the context of English phrases in all of the fields, including pronunciation, spelling, and grammar.

According to the explanation above, the researcher is interested to find out the difficulties faced by students at the junior high school level. Regarding to the background of the research stated above, two research questions are proposed in this research they are 1). What are the difficulties in learning vocabulary faced by eighth-grade students of secondary school in Muhammadiyah Waipare Maumere? 2). What is the influence factors in learning vocabulary faced by eighth-grade students of secondary school in Muhammadiyah Waipare Maumere?

The purpose of the research are to find out 1). To find out the difficulties in vocabulary face by eighth-grade students of secondary school in Muhammadiyah Waipare Maumere. 2). To find out the influence factors in vocabulary face by eighth-grade students of secondary school in Muhammadiyah Waipare Maumere.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Vocabulary is the total number of words as people know and use it in their Language activities, a group of words and meaning to communicate with others as a main part of Language. Vocabulary is an essential subject to students to speak, read, write, and listen. Andriani and Sriwahyuningsih (2019) found that students have a good ability in mastery vocabulary but have some difficulties also that related to the some aspects as grammar and spelling. Students still have many problems or difficulties in vocabulary mastery. Most of students have difficulties in grammar, how to understand the meaning of words, how to spell, and making translation (Rahman, 2016).

Rizky Setiawan and Wiedarti (2020) argued that students have to master English vocabulary first before they produce it through speaking or writing. Vocabulary is the basis of acquiring a second language (Afzal, 2019). In other words, the first skill that a language learner must acquire in order to learn a language, particularly English, is vocabulary. Then, teachers have an important role to introduce them to a large amount of unknown vocabulary (Rizky Setiawan & Wiedarti, 2020)

The difficulty is defined as something difficult to do, hard to understand or a problem. It is something that creates difficulties. Students' difficulties are situations in which the students face troubles. It will be visible in students' mistakes and errors during the learning process. For those whose learning a foreign language, vocabulary knowledge is one of the important aspects. The learners may have some difficulties when they know very little about vocabulary.

Vocabulary is a crucial component of learning a foreign language. Students should learn a sufficient quantity of words and learn how to use them correctly to communicate effectively in a foreign language. Many things complicate learning vocabulary (Irvani, 2019:32) Thornbury stated several factors that become difficulties in learning vocabulary, including pronunciation, spelling, length and complexity, grammar, meaning, and range (connotation and idiomaticity).

There are several factors that influence in learning vocabulary. According to Lesri (2022:12), the influence factors in learning vocabulary are Internal Factors and External Factors.

METHOD

The descriptive qualitative research would be used by the researcher in this research. The reason the researcher chose a qualitative descriptive research design is because the researcher wants to describe the conditions that will be observed in the field and draw conclusions from phenomena that can be observed using numbers. According to Nassaji (2015), descriptive research aims to explain a phenomenon and its traits. Analysis method in this research comprised a descriptive quantitative technique, carrying out characteristics of a survey research during which the writer investigated the students' difficulties and influence factors in learning vocabulary. Survey research designs are processes in quantitative research in which researchers give a survey to a sample or the entire population of people in order to characterize the population's attitudes, views, behaviours, or attributes (Kuupole, 2017). The researcher used quantitative approach in this design.

Mohajan (2020) said that in quantitative research, The researcher depends on statistical (mathematical) examination of the data, which is usually in numerical form. The info assembling technique utilized in this research were close-ended questionnaire. During this research, the subjects selected from eighth-grade students on secondary school in

Muhammadiyah Waipare Maumere. This study would use a purposive sampling technique to take the subject of research. According to Yuliana et al. (2019), purposive sampling is a data collection technique based on certain considerations. These considerations for example, the individual who is thought to be the most knowledgeable about the subject under study, making it easier for researchers to obtain data.

The researcher will use questionnaire to gain the data from participants. Questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of series of questions or other types of instructions that aim to collect information from respondents. The type of questionnaire in this research is close-ended questionnaires.

Based adjustment on the tool of data collection, the researcher treated the data by applied the calculation technique by using Likert scale with four steps as follow :

- a. Score Determination
- b. Determination Ideal Score
- c. Rating Scale
- d. Measurement the Frequency and Percentage of Questionnaire

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected by the instrument was interpreted in Ms. Excel. The researcher utilized a questionnaire to collect data of the student's difficulties and factors in learning vocabulary for this research. The researcher asked 30 students from the 8A class and one of the English teacher of the school there to fill up the questionnaire. The questionnaire for students consisted of 30 statements, where 20 statements were about difficulties in learning vocabulary and 10 statements about influence factors in learning faced by the students, and the teacher consisted of 20 statements about aspects of students' found difficulties in learning vocabulary. The questionnaire was measured with positive and negative statements

1. Students Difficulties in Learning Vocabulary

In the first research question, there are four aspects which are divided into twenty questions that the researcher made in order to get the information that the researcher needs, which is of course relevant to the title of the research. Furthermore, these aspects include meaning, pronunciation, spelling, and grammar.

- a. Students' Questionnaire
 - 1) Meaning

The researcher created and share five statement in the questionnaire with number 1 until number 5 to find the students difficulties in aspect of meaning. Here is the figure of students questionnaire results:

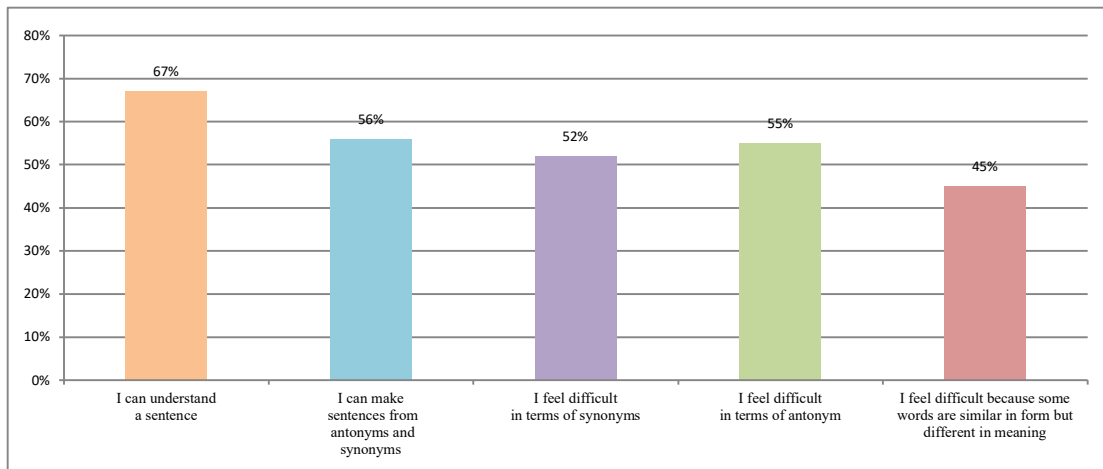


Figure 1. Meaning' percentage aspect of difficulties in learning vocabulary

From the figure above show the percentage and likert based on aspect of meaning. In this aspect have five statements of students' difficulties in learning vocabulary. The result indicated that from 30 students in the first statement got 67%, this implies that most of the students are able to understand English sentences. In second statement got 56%, third statement got 52%, and the fourth statement got 55%, this implies that the students already understand and able to make sentences in the form of antonyms and synonyms. But in the last statement about meaning got 45%, it means that the students are find difficulties in learning vocabulary in term of meaning because some of the same words can have different meaning. So, that it can be concluded that the difference in the meaning of a word is the most common difficulty faced by students.

2) Spelling

The researcher created and share five statement in the questionnaire with number 6 until number 10 to find the students difficulties in aspect of spelling. Here is the figure of students questionnaire results:

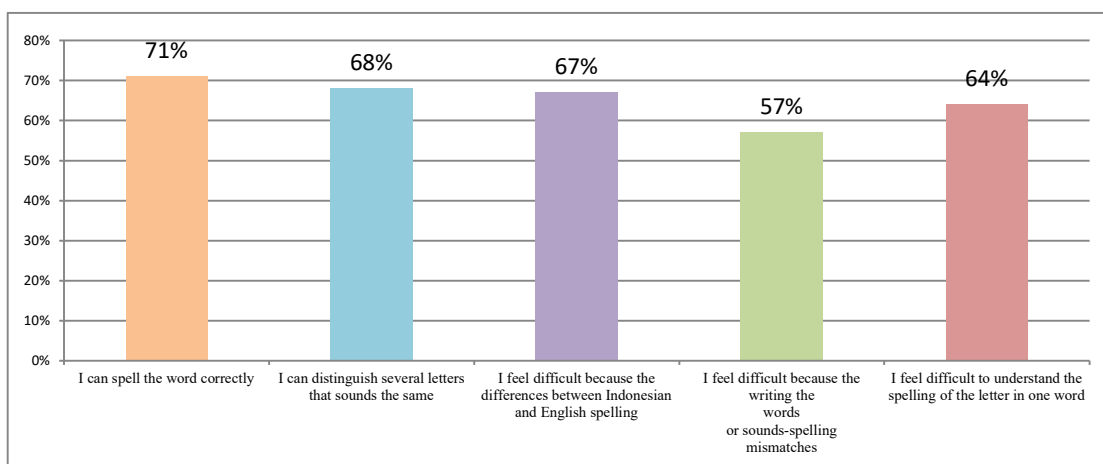


Figure 2. Spelling' percentage aspect of difficulties in learning vocabulary

From the figure above show that the percentage of student difficulties in aspect of spelling. From 30 students the first statement about spelling or statement number 6 got 71%, it means that almost all students are able to spell English words correctly. The second statement or statement number 7 got 68%. Same as in the first statement, in the second statement it can be interpreted that students are able to distinguish several letters that have same sound. The third statement or statement number 8 got 67%, it means that most of students consider the differences between Indonesian and English spelling are not a difficulty that they face in learning vocabulary. The fourth statement or statement number 9 got 57%, it means that the differences between writing word and sound spelling are one of difficulties in spelling faced by the students. The last statement about spelling or statement number 10 got 64%, it means that its not difficult for most of students to understand the spelling of the letter in one word. In other words, the spelling of letters in one word is not a difficulty face by students in learning vocabulary. From the statement above it can be concluded that spelling is not a difficulty faced by students in learning vocabulary. Based on the statements provided in the questionnaire, more students chose to disagree about difficulties in spelling.

3) Pronunciation

The researcher created and share five statement in the questionnaire with number 11 until number 15 to find the students difficulties in aspect of pronunciation. Here is the figure of students questionnaire results:

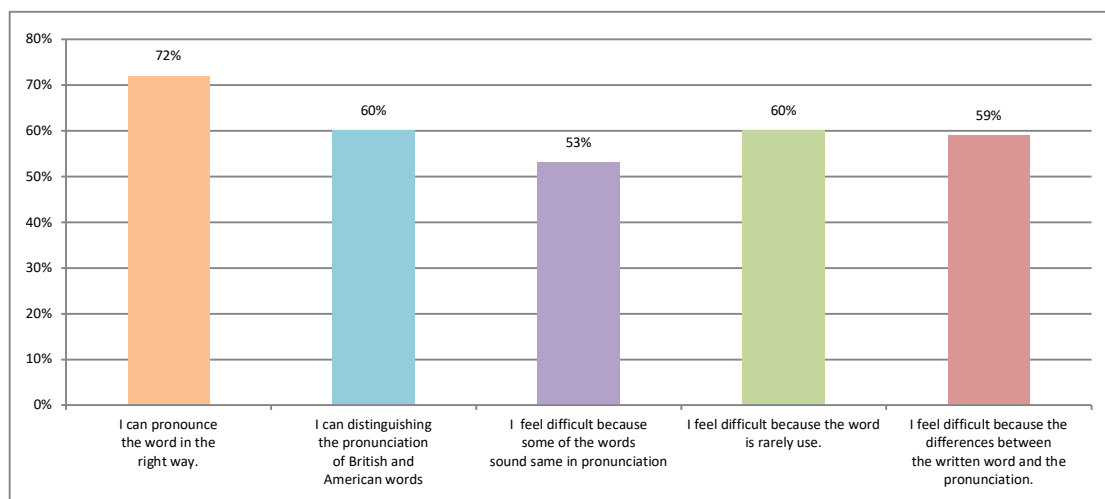


Figure 3. Pronunciation percentage aspect of difficulties in learning vocabulary

From the figure above show the percentage based on pronunciation aspect of students difficulties in learning vocabulary. In the first statement about pronunciation got 72%, it means that almost all students can pronounce word correctly, in other words, this is not a difficulty faced by students. The second statement got 60%, it means that some students find it difficult to distinguish between British and American. The third statement got 53%, it means that several words that have the same pronunciation is one of the things that makes students difficult in learning vocabulary. Besides that in the fourth statement got 60%, it means that some students find it difficult to learn vocabulary due to a lack of practice, and some words are rarely used in everyday life. This shows how important practice is in learning vocabulary. The last statement got 59%, it means the differences in writing word and pronunciation are part of the difficulties

faced by the students in learning vocabulary. From these data, it can be seen that pronunciation is one of the difficulties that students face when learning vocabulary, and one of the things that causes students the most difficulties in the pronunciation aspect is the pronunciation equation of some words.

4) Grammar

The researcher created and share five statement in the questionnaire with number 16 until number 20 to find the students difficulties in aspect of grammar. Here is the figure of students questionnaire results:

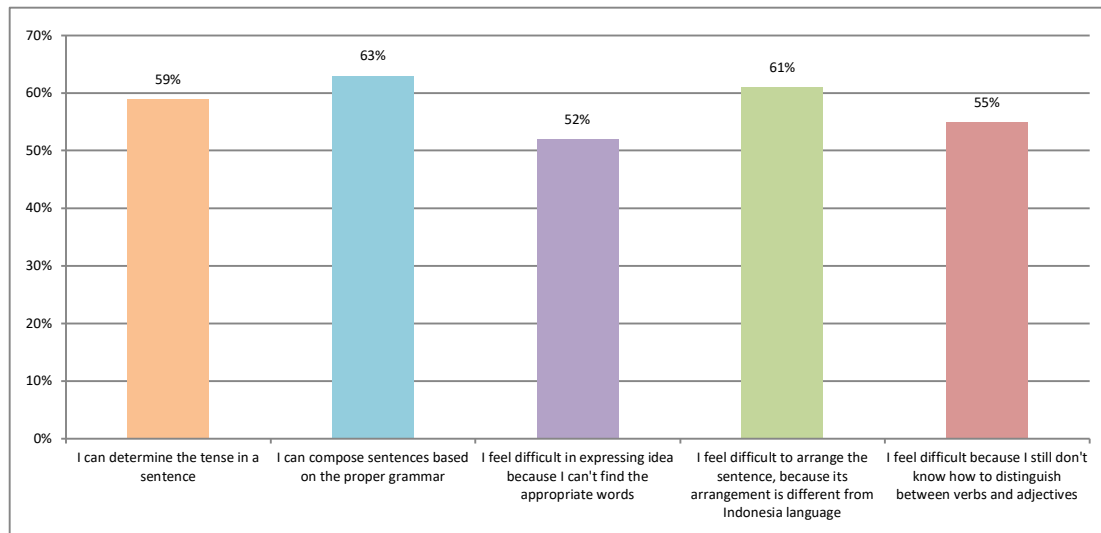


Figure 4. Grammar percentage aspect of difficulties in learning vocabulary

From the figure above show the percentage of grammar aspect of student difficulties in learning vocabulary. The result shows that in the first statement got 59%, it means some students still have difficulty to determining tenses in a sentence. The second statement got 63%, it means most of the students are able to compose a sentences based on the proper grammar. The third statement got 52%, it means that students have difficulty in finding the right words to express their ideas and this is also the cause of their difficulties in learning vocabulary. The fourth statement got 61%, it means the arrangement of English sentences that are different from the arrangement of sentences in Indonesian makes students feel difficult in learning vocabulary. The last statement got 55%, it means that most of the students still have difficulty in differentiating verbs and adjectives. From these data it can be concluded that grammar is also one aspect that makes it difficult for students to learn vocabulary, this is mainly because students cannot find the right words and do not know the difference between verb and adjective.

b. Teachers' Questionnaire

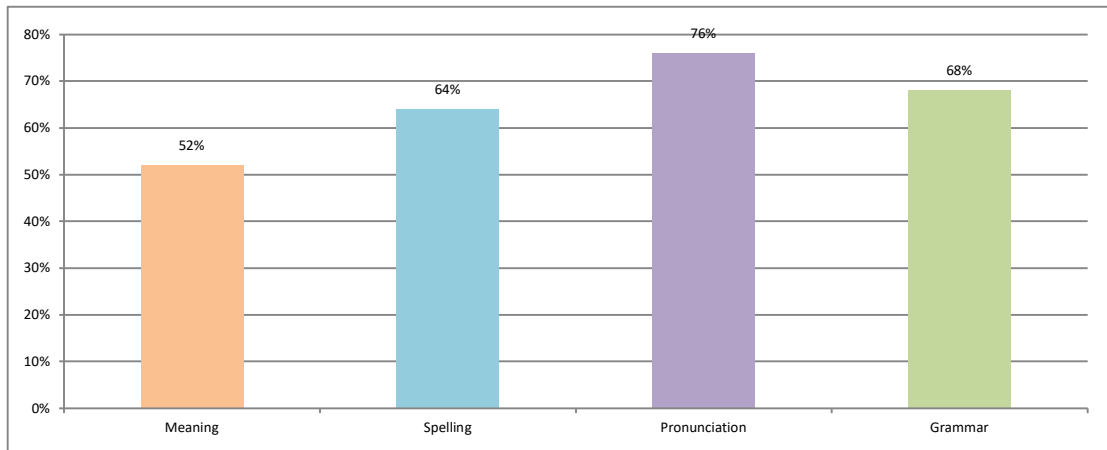


Figure 5. *Overall percentage four aspects of student's difficulties*

The overall result from teachers questionnaire can be seen in the figure above. The figure indicates mean score or percentage of difficulties faced by the students. Low scores or percentage epitomize larger difficulties. The data indicated that each word difficulty group earned almost the same proportion, showing that there was no significant difference between vocabulary difficulty categories. However, the data demonstrated that the larger difficulty is about Meaning indicated by the lowest percentage 52%, followed by Spelling and Grammar with percentage of 64% and 68% respectively. The least difficulty is Pronunciation with 76%.

2. Factors of Students Difficulties in Learning Vocabulary

The figure below will explain the factors of students' difficulties in learning vocabulary. The factors are subdivided into two namely internal factors and external factors.

a. Internal Factors

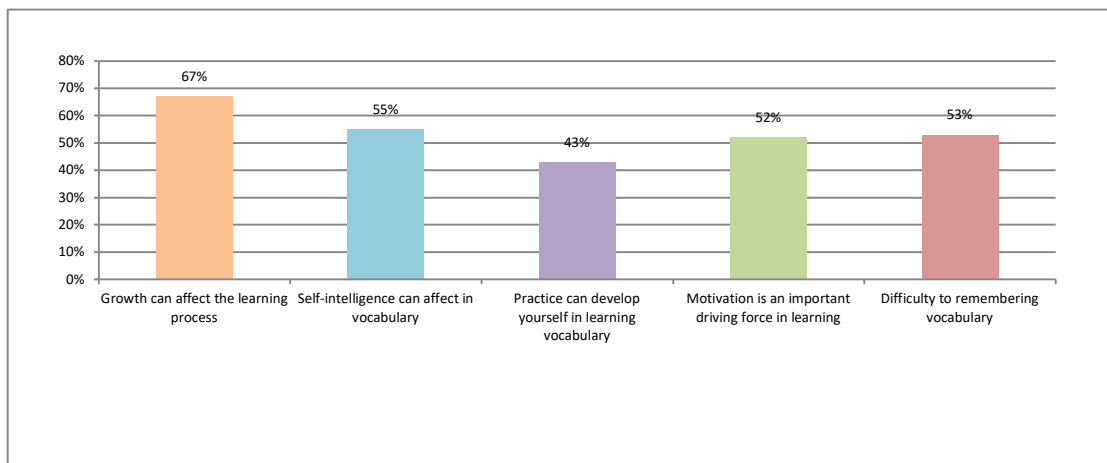


Figure 6. *Internal factor percentage of difficulties in learning vocabulary*

From the figure, it can be seen that the statement number 3 practice can develop yourself in learning vocabulary 43% is the lowest ranked in internal factors. It's mean that practice is the most influential internal factors for students in learning vocabulary. Than followed by motivation and difficulty to remembering with percentage of 52% and 53% respectively. This

shows that it is important to foster students' self-motivation in the learning process. Besides that, the ability to remember becomes one of the obstacles to student learning outcomes. Besides that self-intelligence with percentage of 55% and growth with percentage of 67% also has an influence on the students learning process.

b. External Factors

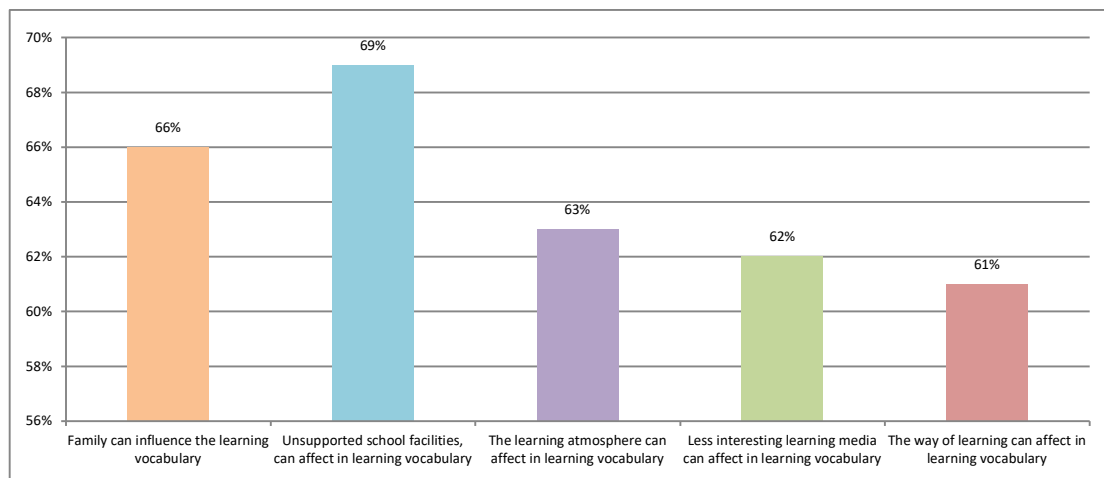


Figure 7. *External factor percentage of difficulties in learning vocabulary*

From the figure above, in external factors the statement number 10, the way of learning can affect in learning vocabulary 61% is the most lowest ranked. It's mean that in external factors the way of learning more affect students' difficulties in learning vocabulary compared to other factors. The next is less interesting learning media with percentage of 62%, it means the learning media used by teachers or students in learning has an influence on the process and achievement of student learning progress. So it is important to prepare interesting learning media so that students are more enthusiastic and interested in learning. After that the external factors followed by learning atmosphere 63%, it means in learning it is very necessary to have a certain learning atmosphere that is able to make students interested in learning, such as for example a comfortable atmosphere or fun learning. The last, there are several external factors that have the least influence on the student learning process, namely family with percentage 66% and school facilities 69%.

The researcher found students feel difficult especially in Meaning (82 Mean of Likert) (55%) as lowest ranked, most of students have difficulties in the students feel difficult to understand the meaning of word. Whereas, grammar (87 Mean of Likert) (58%) as second lowest ranked, the students are in a sentence placing the tenses when they write a sentence

Pronunciation (91 Mean of Likert) (61%) as the third lowest ranked, the students feel difficult to having problem in pronounce the word in English, and the last aspect is spelling (98 Mean of Likert) with percentage (65%) response, the students feel difficult in spelling because they have difficulties to say the word in English. From two factors, the researcher found the student feel difficult in learning vocabulary because of internal factors (80 Mean of Likert) especially in practice (54%) but also because of external factor (96 Mean of Likert) especially in the way of learning (64%).

In this research, the researcher found the students difficulties in learning vocabulary based on students' questionnaires and teachers' questionnaire are meaning and grammar. The first aspect is meaning. The students feel difficulty in learning vocabulary, especially in meaning

because some words are identical in form but distinct in meaning. This is in line with Putri (2017), that a word might have several meanings. This makes the students difficult to determine the meaning of words. Besides that students also have difficulties in terms of antonyms and synonyms, students still do not understand both.

The last aspect is grammar. In this research, the researcher found that the aspect of grammar student don't understand it well this aspects. According to Handayani and Johan (2018), students still have problems and difficulties in some categories of grammatical errors. The students have difficulty in managing tenses, because the language structure is very different between Indonesian and English. Besides that the students had difficulties in expressing their idea because they can't find the appropriate words and still don't know how to distinguish between verbs and adjectives.

The researcher also found the influence factor for students' in learning vocabulary. The first factors is internal factor. According to Mahri et al. (2020) internal factor is factor that originating come from individual students himself. This aspect has a significant impact on learning outcomes or students' skills in a class and explains students' difficulties in learning vocabulary. So these factors are also very important in the learning and self-motivation of students. In this research, the researcher found students have internal factors that make them difficult in learning vocabulary. Some of them are growth, self-intelligence, practice, motivation, and difficulties to remember.

Growth and intelligence can affect the students in learning vocabulary. Besides that, practice also can develop students in learning vocabulary. According to Wijayana et al. (2021), lack of pronunciation practice causes the students difficulties in learning and understanding vocabulary. Many students choose silence and are reluctant to practice vocabulary pronunciation. this is caused by the students' lack of courage to try and students are afraid of being wrong, so they choose not to do it. Next internal factor is motivation. Motivation is an important driving force in learning. One of factor that affect student learning process is students motivation (Mahri et al., 2020). Students that are motivated will research harder, be more resilient, conscientious, and fully concentrate on their studies. So it is very important to bring out student motivation in the learning process. The last is difficulties to remember, according to Wijayana et al. (2021), the students are very enthusiastic when they find new vocabulary, but they easily forget the vocabulary when the lesson is finished.

The next is external factor. The result of this research explain that external factor also influence the students in learning vocabulary. According to Lesri (2022), family, teaching variations, use of learning media and facilities and infrastructure are examples of external factors produced by students. Based on the result of students' questionnaire, in external factors family, unsupported school facilities, learning atmosphere, less interesting learning media, and the way of learning can effecting the learning vocabulary. This is line with Ramli et al.(2018) that family environment and student learning atmosphere have a significant influence on student learning processes. The schools' atmosphere has an important role in the comfort of students when researching in the class, an uncomfortable atmosphere will certainly interfere with student learning concentration. In addition, support from parents and the student's home environment also influences the development of student learning, so that students have great motivation to learn.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result and discussion of the research supported by the data that has been done. The researcher discovered that the difficulties in learning vocabulary faced by the eighth-grade students of Junior High School in Muhammadiyah Waipare Maumere in academic year 2022/2023 were various. From the discussion above, it can be concluded that meaning, pronunciation, spelling and grammar are the indicators of students' difficulties in learning vocabulary, and the result of the questionnaires show that meaning and grammar is the most dominant aspect of students difficulty. Than follow by pronunciation, and spelling.

Besides some aspect of difficulties, there were also some factors that caused students' difficulties in learning vocabulary namely internal and external factors. Based on the data from questionnaires, the internal factors that might impact the learning of students in vocabulary were growth, intelligence, practice, motivation, and ability to remembering. While, the external factors that can influence the students were family, facilities, learning atmosphere, learning media, and teaching variety. So that the dominant internal and external factors face by the students were practice and teaching variety. And for the next researcher who willing to conduct research about this topic, the researcher personally suggest to find teaching medias and teaching techniques that match with the students difficulties in certain aspect, hence it can help teachers and students.

Based on the conclusion above, the researcher would like to give some suggestion. The suggestion is as follows:

Teacher should analyze students' difficulties in learning vocabulary in order to help the students in learning English by giving suggestion on how to use and practice. Also, there are many teaching activities, teaching medias and teaching techniques that can be used to make teaching learning activities easier for the students, especially in vocabulary aspects.

Students should actively consult with the teacher regarding their difficulties in learning vocabulary so the teacher can manage to help them by using certain teaching activities, teaching medias and teaching techniques. Students also need to practice to speak and use vocabulary as much as possible with their teachers and friends, moreover students also can use internet (YouTube and others platform) to listen and practice to speak and use vocabulary properly.

For the next researcher who willing to conduct research about this topic, the researcher personally suggest to find teaching medias and teaching techniques that match with the students difficulties in certain aspect, hence it can help teachers and student.

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