

BAB 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Framework

2.1.1. EFL Context

EFL, or English as a Foreign Language, is a term for English that is not generally used in everyday life in a country; it is only used as an academic subject, and people study and use the language only in the classroom. Brown (2008) defined EFL as a “generic term or English learned as a foreign language in a country or context in which English is not commonly used as a language of education, business, or government, for example, expanding circle countries.”

Since English is not commonly used in the EFL context, it influences EFL students’ motivation to learn the language. As Gardner et al. (1985) mentioned, attitude and motivation in learning a language are important since they affect the rate at which a second language is learned. However, many EFL learners lack the motivation to learn English as the environment does not support them in having that kind of motivation, such as a lack of practical application for English in students’ everyday lives.

The challenges of EFL environments and the importance of motivation highlight the need for teaching techniques that sustain students’ interest while addressing their learning needs. The Narrow reading strategy offers a solution by presenting vocabulary repeatedly within varied, meaningful contexts, making learning more effective and enjoyable. Adapting reading material to students’ interests and needs can also enhance motivation, empowering

learners to expand their vocabulary while building confidence in their abilities.

2.1.2. Vocabulary Learning Overview

2.1.2.1. What is vocabulary?

Vocabulary is an essential part of a language; it is as important as other primary skills of language learning, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. According to Lamante (2020), vocabulary is the combination of several words that help learners understand whole activities in the classroom. Based on understanding, vocabulary refers to the words used in a language, written or spoken. Vocabulary knowledge becomes a key to accomplishment for learners to master the languages. Before students have the valuable ability of a language, they have to master the language's vocabulary first. Manihuruk (2020) emphasized that vocabulary mastery is necessary to communicate through the language.

Vocabulary mastery means learners can use different words in their daily activities, especially in the English teaching-learning process. It includes vocabulary knowledge that consists of a form (spoken, written, and word parts), meaning (form and meaning, concept and referents, and association), and use (Grammatical functions, collocation, and constraints on use) (Webb & Nation, 2018) It certainly helps learners master four language skills (Manihuruk, 2020). In line with Tran (2020), many researchers have argued that vocabulary is one of the most vital components of language learning, supporting four language skills.

2.1.2.2. How is Vocabulary Learned and Taught?

As other language skills, vocabulary also has its own strategy and procedure to be learned and taught. Nation (2001) mentioned about four strands of vocabulary teaching-learning which are language focus learning, meaning focused input, meaning focus output, and fluency. The best teaching strategy for teaching vocabulary is one that focuses not only on one strand but supports all of them. According to Brown (2008), in his book, there are some vocabulary teaching principles that teachers should consider. One principle is that vocabulary should be taught integrated with other language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Vocabulary should not be taught in isolation but in meaningful contexts. For example, students can practice new vocabulary by using the word in a group discussion, applying it in a written, or identifying it in a listening activity. This integration ensures that students not only understand the meanings of words but also develop the ability to use them naturally in different contexts.

However, numerous teaching techniques and media can be used for learning vocabulary, such as dictionary strategy, note-taking, memorization, and repetition (Wege, 2018). Each method offers unique benefits. For instance, dictionary use allows students to develop independent learning skills, while note-taking encourages them to personalize their learning process by jotting down definitions, example sentences, or related phrases. Memorization techniques, help students remember difficult words, and repetition ensure that these words are committed to long-term memory through regular practice.

Moreover, Sarifa (2018) mentioned some common techniques that are frequently used, such as semantic mapping, affixation, flashcards, word puzzles, predicting family words, deducing meaning from the context, reading comprehension, and many more. By offering such diverse techniques, educators can cater to varying learning preferences and create a rich environment for vocabulary acquisition.

2.1.2.3. Vocabulary Learning through Reading

Vocabulary learning can be done through reading activities. Reading activities become the medium for learners to learn vocabulary. Reading is a powerful tool for developing literacy and language skills (Renandya et al., 2018). It is not only exposing learners to a wide range of vocabulary but also reinforces the usage of words in meaningful contexts. Reading is a practical resource and a booster for learners of vocabulary development (Ballance, 2021; Pellicer-Sánchez, 2012). The more learners read, the more vocabulary they can acquire (Wege, 2018).

Teachers can provide reading activities to help students learn English vocabulary. Extensive reading, for example, involves exposing students to large amounts of text at their proficiency level, helping them encounter vocabulary in contexts. Furthermore, Feng & Webb (2020) highlight that reading not only increases knowledge of single-word items but also aids in understanding the written form, part of speech, and collocation.

However, to maximize the benefits of vocabulary learning through reading, implementing effective strategies

is essential. Following the vocabulary teaching stages by Nation (2001), one key approach is pre-teaching vocabulary, where teachers introduce key words before reading, providing definitions, examples, or visual aids to ensure comprehension. Furthermore, during reading, students can be encouraged to use context clues, such as synonyms, antonyms, or examples within the text, to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words. Using tools like dictionaries or glossaries can also support understanding. Moreover, after reading, maintaining a vocabulary journal can help students record, review, and practice new words over time. Additionally, integrating reading with other language skills, such as speaking and writing, allows students to reinforce their vocabulary actively. For instance, they can create sentence using new words or participate in discussions related to the text. These strategies ensure that reading becomes not just an activity for comprehension but also a powerful tool for long-term vocabulary retention.

2.1.3. Narrow Reading in Vocabulary Learning

2.1.3.1. What is narrow reading?

Narrow reading is a reading activity which focus only on single topic based on the reader's interest and is tailored to their proficiency level. Narrow reading (NR) or series reading is a concept introduced by Krashen in 1981. It is a reading interrelated book activity, or it can be said that reading several books from the same author, same genre, or same theme consistently over a while (Ballance, 2021; Chang & Renandya, 2021; Krashen, 1981; Renandya et al., 2018; Schmitt & Carter, 2000) According to Adelia Putri et al. (2019), "narrow reading is the strategy in learning reading

comprehension that focuses on reading one author, book, or single topic that readers are interested in” (p.8).

2.1.3.2. The Benefit of Narrow Reading

Narrow reading could help EFL learners improve their vocabulary mastery. In narrow reading, students can read only the same genre or topic of texts based on their interests, which can motivate them to read and gain background knowledge of the text. It helps them to dig for more information about the style of the reading passage. Having background knowledge of the topic will make it easier for them to understand the other reading passages, which means they are familiar with the words or vocabulary.

Many studies have confirmed that students can acquire a lot of vocabulary through reading (Kang, 2015; Renandya et al., 2018; Suk, 2017). Nonetheless, the amount of vocabulary loaded in a text might burden students. A large number of word types and word families found in unrelated text carriages is a potential challenge for students to understand the text (Kang, 2015). Meanwhile, word repetition and familiarity are needed for students to support vocabulary learning success (Schmitt & Carter, 2000).

However, reading related text is possible to reduce the challenge. The narrow reading strategy delivers students with familiar background information and language (Schmitt & Carter, 2000), which supports students to become familiar with and increases background knowledge that students have access to, and it reduces the number of vocabularies that students need to identify by reducing lexical variation in a text (Chang & Renandya, 2021; Grabe & Stoller, 2018). In

other words, the more frequently a word is met while reading, the more likely it will be learned (Feng & Webb, 2020). For those reasons, narrow reading is appropriate for lower-level students to learn vocabulary (Pellicer-Sánchez, 2012)

Schmitt & Carter (2000) mentioned some advantages of narrow reading. First, students will understand the topic and have background knowledge for the upcoming text. Second, in terms of vocabulary distribution dynamics, buzzwords in topic-related texts tend to recur, alleviating the lexical load on students as they become acquainted with this vocabulary.

2.1.3.3. How to apply Narrow Reading in a classroom

Based on the benefits of a narrow reading strategy, a question is how to apply it in the classroom. According to Schmitt & Carter (2000), teachers can do several things to encourage narrow reading in particular. First, newspaper articles on a specific subject should be collected for students to study. Second, choose reading resources that will keep students' attention. Even when concentrating on other parts of the language, the teacher can assign students narrow readings. Third, students should be allowed to bring magazines about subjects they are interested in and read several pieces from them. Then, students should peruse the literature. Following a narrative thread within a single book should provide similar benefits to reading several pieces on the same news topic. Simplified readers can provide helpful reading input at the intermediate stage if students are not ready to try genuine, adult-level literature. Students can also

be urged to study authentic material published at the elementary or secondary education level. Then, narrow reading does not have to be limited to writing on paper. The internet has a vast quantity of genuine writings on almost any subject conceivable, the vast majority of which are in English. After that, teachers can restrict the vocabulary and structures that students will meet by having them read text from a single author, as writers frequently pull from the same vocabulary pool and use a similar writing style in their various writings.

On the other hand, Krashen (1981) declared, there are some aspects that teachers need to consider when conducting narrow reading in the classroom. First, lower the standards, teachers let students read only material in the target language that is genuinely enjoyable, fascinating, and easy for them. Teachers should not expect students to read academic material that might be hard for them. Second, do not push students to keep reading the topic if the book or magazine is too complex or not interesting for them. Let them stop reading and find something else.

Additionally, as what Krashen mentioned, teacher should lower their standard while using NR in the classroom. Adjusting the reading material with students' proficiency level is very important. Instead of using book as the reading material which can feel overwhelming, teacher can provide a very simple text for students in lower level to help them start their reading and vocabulary learning journey.

2.2. Study of Relevant Research

Many studies have investigated the use of narrow reading and its effects on vocabulary acquisition. In this case, Chang (2019) found that narrow reading helps students smoothly improve their vocabulary skill level from the lower to the higher level by reading only one related text at each level during the treatment period.

Chang & Renandya (2021), investigated the effect of narrow reading on English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' vocabulary learning. The research participants were twelve graded readers who were selected and divided into four sets: same author, same genre, same title, and random readers. Using the linear mixed-effects model (LMM) to analyze the data, the result showed that more vocabulary words were acquired from the text by the same author or random texts than from texts of the same title. Reading the same title leads to a less successful outcome in acquiring vocabulary compared to texts by the same author, same theme, or random texts. The different scores students gained from time to time indicated that learning rates increased as they read more.

Kang (2015), conducted a study to investigate the effects of narrow reading on L2 lexical development and its pedagogical applicability in instructional L2 learning. The findings revealed that narrow reading significantly improved students' grasp of target word meanings and their ability to utilize them effectively. The replies of the narrow group to an exit questionnaire indicated numerous causes that may have accounted for this development in their vocabulary knowledge.

Chang & Renandya (2020), in the article "The Effect of Narrow Reading on L2 Learners' Perceptions", explored the teacher's perceived effectiveness of the reading materials. This study investigated L2 students' perception of narrow reading. By using linear mixed effect models to analyze the data, the study revealed that the narrow

reading program could be considered successful. The result showed that the students had gained varying linguistic knowledge and provided valuable reading feedback after reading some sets of texts.

Ballance (2021) in her study stated that narrow reading increases the amount of background knowledge a student has available. Reading in a narrow field increases the number of times that particular words and their collocations are encountered in a novel context. Narrow reading can fast-track mastery of lexical items by providing a reading focused on a comparatively narrow range of lexical items. This is in line with Bryan (2011), who, in a literature review, revealed that the evidence suggests extensive reading and narrow reading can be effective and valuable techniques for L2 learners and EFL learners to improve their vocabulary and fluency.