

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

The importance of vocabulary is demonstrated daily in and out the school. In classroom, the students must possess certain amount of vocabularies. Nation stated that in English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL), learning vocabulary items plays a vital role in all language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing (2011). From that statement, Vocabulary plays a significant role in language learning, which is also in the dominant position in learning a second language. Thus, it drives the interests of researchers to conduct a research. Besides, in recent years, there have been many studies on mental lexicon, which is a relatively new area of research in psycholinguistics, one of them is Word Association Test (WAT).

Bahar and Hansell defined Word Association Test (WAT) as one of the ways to explore about cognitive structure. It can be used as an alternative way to test vocabulary and the ability to related word with the other word (cited in Nekah et al., 2013, p. 386), for example as Pranoto and Afrilita stated in their journal that if someone hears or reads the word *School* and the next words likely to appear in a person's cognition are *Learning process*, *Teacher*, or *Students*. The connection of the word *School* to other words that being activated when the word *School* is caught by the senses is called as Word Association (2018). The Word Association Test is tested by giving a one-word stimulus to the participants, then they are asked to write or mention the first word that firstly comes to their mind when they hear or

read the word. Many previous studies have proved that the associated word tends to be accessible more quickly by respondents. According to Fitzpatrick, word association and word association test (WAT) is conducted in order to measure how much our mental lexicon can store any vocabularies in our mind (2007).

According to Field, lexical items are classified into three areas: (1) lexical entries, (2) lexical storage, and (3) lexical access. Then he defined that lexical entries are the information about lexical items which are stored in human's mind, meanwhile lexical storage is about how the words are stored together according to semantic and to formal criteria. Then, lexical access is about reaching a word when people need it (2004, p. 10). The researcher then decides to conduct the research dealing with lexical storage because it is simpler to investigate and easier to conduct due to various of instruments, such as questionnaire, interview, and any other instruments which are close to the researcher, because Widayanti (2015) argued that if we use *lexical access*, it deals with the experiment such as language production, word recognition and etc., since we need technology tools such as MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) or Weaver++ to record the data.

In Faculty of Arts and Education (FSIP) of Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia, there are two English-based study program, those are English Literature and English Education. There is a Vocabulary subject only for English Education study program which is aimed to enrich EFL vocabularies, meanwhile there is no Vocabulary subject in English literature, so the aim of this study is the researcher wants to know and find the gap of the mental lexicon between two different groups

of Teknokrat EFL learners and how they relate a word to another words spontaneously after passing and not taking Vocabulary subject. Finding the gaps between group to another group needs to be discussed because based on Precosky (2011), by isolating the groups of respondents, finding gap can consider whether different proficiency seems to cause a shift in response patterns or if it is likely that there are deep fundamental difference between two or more groups.

The purpose of researching mental lexicon is because it deals with how the words are activated, stored, processed, and retrieved by each speaker. An individual's mental lexicon may change and grow as new words are learned and are always developed, because Merten (cited in Permatasari, 2011 p.14) there are factors that influence mental lexicon's someone, those are *age, personality variables, intelligence, self reflected thought and speech disorder as variables.*

In addition, this paper aims to study how foreign language authentic materials affect the development of students' mental lexicon (Shoikova & Tikhonova, 2014), so the researcher would like to compare between 4<sup>th</sup> semester English Education students and 4<sup>th</sup> semester English Literature students who have the same capabilities but different Study Program.

## **1.2. Research Question**

Regarding from the background of the study, the research questions from this study were:

1. How was the mental lexicon of 4<sup>th</sup> semester of English Education and English Literature students ?

### **1.3. Research Objective**

Based on the research questions above, there were three research objectives of this analysis, the first was to reveal mental lexicon of 4<sup>th</sup> semester English Education students, second was to reveal mental lexicon of 4<sup>th</sup> semester English Literature students. By revealing the mental lexicon of both 4<sup>th</sup> semester English Education and English literature students, the researchers would see the gap of mental lexicon of both 4<sup>th</sup> semester English Education students and 4<sup>th</sup> semester English Literature students.

### **1.4. Uses of the Study**

By considering the aims of this research, the researcher expected that this research could give several advantages as follows:

#### **1.4.1. Theoretical Use**

For the sake of knowledge, this paper is expected to give scientific benefits to its readers. It is hoped that this study can contribute knowledge about word association and mental lexicon for EFL. Thus, by reading this paper, the knowledge about word association and kinds of word association can be gained by the readers. Furthermore, this paper is also created to be a sufficient previous study for scientific researches later.

#### **1.4.2. Practical Use**

This research is not only conducted solely to enable the readers in relating a word to another words, but also the results of this study can be applied in the vocabulary

teaching, especially in the L2 vocabularies learning and how to improve the efficiency of studying foreign languages especially English as L2. Besides, this research can be as the fundamental of learning strategy for lecturers of Faculty of Arts and Education, because after finishing the research we have known the maps or how the mental lexicon of both 4<sup>th</sup> semester English Education students and English Literature students look like. This map can be a fundamental aspect to create or formulate the learning strategies.

### **1.5. Scope of the Study**

In this research of paper, the researcher focused on analyzing word association based on Piggot's theory (2006) to classify types of word association. the subject or participants of this research was limited by the researchers, they were 26 participants who were divided into two groups, 4<sup>th</sup> semester English Education students who have taken Vocabulary subject and 4<sup>th</sup> semester English Literature students who do not take Vocabulary subjects. The questionnaire consists of 8 words that based on *Swadesh* list to become stimuli that will be responded by the participants spontaneously. The use of the Swadesh wordlist as a stimulus aims to ensure that the concepts and references raised by a word are the same.